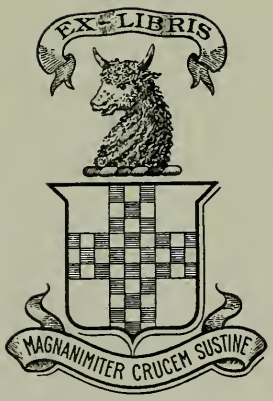

Drusilla Wahl Pierce

THE MEMOIRS OF
JACQUES CASANOVA

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF NOW FOR
THE FIRST TIME TRANSLATED INTO
ENGLISH IN TWELVE VOLUMES
VOLUME THREE

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MEMOIRS

OF

JACQUES CASANOVA

CHAPTER I

I LEAVE BOLOGNA A HAPPY MAN—THE CAPTAIN PARTS FROM US IN REGGIO, WHERE I SPEND A DELIGHTFUL NIGHT WITH HENRIETTE—OUR ARRIVAL IN PARMA—HENRIETTE RESUMES THE COSTUME OF A WOMAN; OUR MUTUAL FELICITY—I MEET SOME RELATIVES OF MINE, BUT DO NOT DISCOVER MYSELF

The reader can easily guess that there was a change as sudden as a transformation in a pantomime, and that the short but magic sentence, "Come to Parma," proved a very fortunate catastrophe, thanks to which I rapidly changed, passing from the tragic to the gentle mood, from the serious to the tender tone. Sooth to say, I fell at her feet,

and lovingly pressing her knees I kissed them repeatedly with raptures of gratitude. No more *furore,* no more bitter words; they do not suit the sweetest of all human feelings! Loving, docile, grateful, I swear never to beg for any favour, not even to kiss her hand, until I have shewn myself worthy of her precious love! The heavenly creature, delighted to see me pass so rapidly from despair to the most lively tenderness, tells me, with a voice the tone of which breathes of love, to get up from my knees.

"I am sure that you love me," says she, "and be quite certain that I shall leave nothing undone to secure the constancy of your feelings."

Even if she had said that she loved me as much as I adored her, she would not have been more eloquent, for her words expressed all that can be felt. My lips were pressed to her beautiful hands as the captain entered the room. He complimented us with perfect good faith, and I told him, my face beaming with happiness, that I was going to order the carriage. I left them together, and in a short time we were on our road, cheerful, pleased, and merry.

Before reaching Reggio the honest captain told me that in his opinion it would be better for him to proceed to Parma alone, as, if we arrived in that city all together, it might cause some remarks, and people would talk about us much less if we were without him. We both thought him quite

right, and we immediately made up our minds to pass the night in Reggio, while the captain would take a post-chaise and go alone to Parma. According to that arrangement his trunk was transferred to the vehicle which he hired in Reggio, he bade us farewell and went away, after having promised to dine with us on the following day in Parma.

The decision taken by the worthy Hungarian was, doubtless, as agreeable to my lovely friend as to me, for our delicacy would have condemned us to a great reserve in his presence. And truly, under the new circumstances, how were we to arrange for our lodgings in Reggio? Henriette could not, of course, share the bed of the captain any more, and she could not have slept with me as long as he was with us, without being guilty of great immodesty. We should all three have laughed at that compulsory reserve which we would have felt to be ridiculous, but we should, for all that, have submitted to it. Love is the little impudent god, the enemy of bashfulness, although he may very often enjoy darkness and mystery, but if he gives way to it he feels disgraced; he loses three-fourths of his dignity and the greatest portion of his charms.

Evidently there could be no happiness for Henriette or for me unless we parted with the person and even with the remembrance of the excellent captain.

We supped alone. I was intoxicated with a felicity which seemed too immense, and yet I felt melancholy, but Henriette, who looked sad likewise, had no reproach to address to me. Our sadness was in reality nothing but shyness; we loved each other, but we had had no time to become acquainted. We exchanged only a few words, there was nothing witty, nothing interesting in our conversation, which struck us both as insipid, and we found more pleasure in the thoughts which filled our minds. We knew that we were going to pass the night together, but we could not have spoken of it openly. What a night! what a delightful creature was that Henriette whom I have loved so deeply, who has made me so supremely happy!

It was only three or four days later that I ventured on asking her what she would have done, without a groat in her possession, having not one acquaintance in Parma, if I had been afraid to declare my love, and if I had gone to Naples. She answered that she would doubtless have found herself in very great difficulties, but that she had all along felt certain of my love, and that she had foreseen what had happened. She added that, being impatient to know what I thought of her, she had asked me to translate to the captain what she had expressed respecting her resolution, knowing that he could neither oppose that resolution nor continue to live with her, and that, as

she had taken care not to include me in the prayer which she had addressed to him through me, she had thought it impossible that I should fail to ask whether I could be of some service to her, waiting to take a decision until she could have ascertained the nature of my feelings towards her. She concluded by telling me that if she had fallen it was the fault of her husband and of her father-in-law, both of whom she characterized as monsters rather than men.

When we reached Parma, I gave the police the name of Farusi, the same that I had assumed in Cesena; it was the family name of my mother; while Henriette wrote down, "Anne D'Arci, from France." While we were answering the questions of the officer, a young Frenchman, smart and intelligent-looking, offered me his services, and advised me not to put up at the posting-inn, but to take lodgings at D'Andremont's hotel, where I should find good apartments, French cooking, and the best French wines.

Seeing that Henriette was pleased with the proposal, I told the young man to take us there, and we were soon very comfortably lodged. I engaged the Frenchman by the day, and carefully settled all my arrangements with D'Andremont. After that I attended to the housing of my carriage.

Coming in again for a few minutes, I told Henriette that I would return in time for dinner, and, ordering the servant to remain in the ante-room, I went out alone.

Parma was then groaning under a new government. I had every reason to suppose that there were spies everywhere and under every form. I therefor did not want to have at my heels a valet who might have injured rather than served me. Though I was in my father's native city, I had no acquaintances there, but I knew that I should soon find my way.

When I found myself in the streets, I scarcely could believe that I was in Italy, for everything had a tramontane appearance. I heard nothing but French and Spanish, and those who did not speak one of those languages seemed to be whispering to one another. I was going about at random, looking for a hosier, yet unwilling to enquire where I could find one; at last I saw what I wanted.

I entered the shop, and addressing myself to a stout, good-looking woman seated behind the counter, I said,—

"Madam, I wish to make some purchases."

"Sir, shall I send for someone speaking French?"

"You need not do so, I am an Italian."

"God be praised! Italians are scarce in these days."

"Why scarce?"

"Do you not know that Don Philip has arrived, and that his wife, Madame de France, is on the road?"

"I congratulate you, for it must make trade

very good. I suppose that money is plentiful, and that there is abundance of all commodities."

"That is true, but everything is high in price, and we cannot get reconciled to these new fashions. They are a bad mixture of French freedom and Spanish haughtiness which addles our brains. But, sir, what sort of linen do you require?"

"In the first place, I must tell you that I never try to drive a hard bargain, therefore be careful. If you charge me too much, I shall not come again. I want some fine linen for twenty-four chemises, some dimity for stays and petticoats, some muslin, some cambric for pocket-handkerchiefs, and many other articles which I should be very glad to find in your shop, for I am a stranger here, and God knows in what hands I am going to trust myself!"

"You will be in honest ones, if you will give me your confidence."

"I am sure that you deserve it, and I abandon my interests to you. I want likewise to find some needlewomen willing to work in the lady's room, because she requires everything to be made very rapidly."

"And dresses?"

"Yes, dresses, caps, mantles—in fact, everything, for she is naked."

"With money she will soon have all she wants. Is she young?"

"She is four years younger than I. She is my wife."

"Ah! may God bless you! Any children?"

"Not yet, my good lady, but they will come, for we do all that is necessary to have them."

"I have no doubt of it. How pleased I am! Well, sir, I shall send for the very phœnix of all dressmakers. In the mean time, choose what you require, it will amuse you."

I took the best of everything and paid, and the dressmaker making her appearance at that moment I gave my address, requesting that various sorts of stuff might be sent at once. I told the dressmaker and her daughter, who had come with her, to follow me and to carry the linen. On my way to the hotel I bought several pairs of silk stockings, and took with me a bootmaker who lived close by.

Oh, what a delightful moment! Henriette, who had not the slightest idea of what I had gone out for, looked at everything with great pleasure, yet without any of those demonstrations which announce a selfish or interested disposition. She shewed her gratitude only by the delicate praise which she bestowed upon my taste and upon the quality of the articles I had purchased. She was not more cheerful on account of my presents, but the tender affection with which she looked at me was the best proof of her grateful feelings.

The valet I had hired had entered the room with the shoemaker. Henriette told him quietly to withdraw, and not to come unless he was called.

The dressmaker set to work, the shoemaker took her measure, and I told him to bring some slippers. He returned in a short time, and the valet came in again with him without having been called. The shoemaker, who spoke French, was talking the usual nonsense of dealers, when she interrupted him to ask the valet, who was standing familiarly in the room, what he wanted.

"Nothing, madam, I am only waiting for your orders."

"Have I not told you that you would be called when your services were required?"

"I should like to know who is my master, you or the gentleman?"

"Neither," I replied, laughing. "Here are your day's wages. Be off at once."

The shoemaker, seeing that Henriette spoke only French, begged to recommend a teacher of languages.

"What country does he belong to?" she enquired.

"To Flanders, madam," answered Crispin, "he is a very learned man, about fifty years old. He is said to be a good man. He charges three libbre for each lesson of one hour, and six for two hours, but he requires to be paid each time."

"My dear," said Henriette to me, "do you wish me to engage that master?"

"Yes, dearest, it will amuse you."

The shoemaker promised to send the Flemish professor the next morning.

The dressmakers were hard at work, the mother cutting and the daughter sewing, but, as progress could not be too rapid, I told the mother that she would oblige us if she could procure another seamstress who spoke French.

"You shall have one this very day, sir," she answered, and she offered me the services of her own son as a servant, saying that if I took him I should be certain to have neither a thief nor a spy about me, and that he spoke French pretty well. Henriette thought we could not do better than take the young man. Of course that was enough to make me consent at once, for the slightest wish of the woman we love is our supreme law. The mother went for him, and she brought back at the same time the half-French dressmaker. It all amused my goddess, who looked very happy.

The young man was about eighteen, pleasant, gentle and modest. I enquired his name, and he answered that it was Caudagna.

The reader may very likely recollect that my father's native place had been Parma, and that one of his sisters had married a Caudagna. "It would be a curious coincidence," I thought, "if that dressmaker should be my aunt, and my valet my cousin!" but I did not say it aloud.

Henriette asked me if I had any objection to the first dressmaker dining at our table.

"I entreat you, my darling," I answered, "never, for the future, to ask my consent in such

trifling matters. Be quite certain, my beloved, that I shall always approve everything you may do."

She smiled and thanked me. I took out my purse, and said to her,—

"Take these fifty sequins, dearest, to pay for all your small expenses, and to buy the many trifles which I should be sure to forget."

She took the money, assuring me that she was vastly obliged to me.

A short time before dinner the worthy captain made his appearance. Henriette ran to meet him and kissed him, calling him her dear father, and I followed her example by calling him my friend. My beloved little wife invited him to dine with us every day. The excellent fellow, seeing all the women working busily for Henriette, was highly pleased at having procured such a good position for his young adventuress, and I crowned his happiness by telling him that I was indebted to him for my felicity.

Our dinner was delicious, and it proved a cheerful meal. I found out that Henriette was dainty, and my old friend a lover of good wines. I was both, and felt that I was a match for them. We tasted several excellent wines which D'Andremont had recommended, and altogether we had a very good dinner.

The young valet pleased me in consequence of the respectful manner in which he served everyone,

his mother as well as his masters. His sister and the other seamstress had dined apart.

We were enjoying our dessert when the hosier was announced, accompanied by another woman and a milliner who could speak French. The other woman had brought patterns of all sorts of dresses. I let Henriette order caps, head-dresses, etc., as she pleased, but I would interfere in the dress department although I complied with the excellent taste of my charming friend. I made her choose four dresses, and I was indeed grateful for her ready acceptance of them, for my own happiness was increased in proportion to the pleasure I gave her and the influence I was obtaining over her heart.

Thus did we spend the first day, and we could certainly not have accomplished more.

In the evening, as we were alone at supper, I fancied that her lovely face looked sad. I told her so.

"My darling," she answered, with a voice which went to my heart, "you are spending a great deal of money on me, and if you do so in the hope of my loving you more dearly I must tell you it is money lost, for I do not love you now more than I did yesterday, but I do love you with my whole heart. All you may do that is not strictly necessary pleases me only because I see more and more how worthy you are of me, but it is not needed to make me feel all the deep love which you deserve."

"I believe you, dearest, and my happiness is

indeed great if you feel that your love for me cannot be increased. But learn also, delight of my heart, that I have done it all only to try to love you even more than I do, if possible. I wish to see you beautiful and brilliant in the attire of your sex, and if there is one drop of bitterness in the fragrant cup of my felicity, it is a regret at not being able to surround you with the halo which you deserve. Can I be otherwise than delighted, my love, if you are pleased?"

"You cannot for one moment doubt my being pleased, and as you have called me your wife you are right in one way, but if you are not very rich I leave it to you to judge how deeply I ought to reproach myself."

"Ah, my beloved angel! let me, I beg of you, believe myself wealthy, and be quite certain that you cannot possibly be the cause of my ruin. You were born only for my happiness. All I wish is that you may never leave me. Tell me whether I can entertain such a hope."

"I wish it myself, dearest, but who can be sure of the future? Are you free? Are you dependent on anyone?"

"I am free in the broadest meaning of that word, I am dependent on no one but you, and I love to be so."

"I congratulate you, and I am very glad of it, for no one can tear you from my arms, but, alas! you know that I cannot say the same as you.

I am certain that some persons are, even now, seeking for me, and they will not find it very difficult to secure me if they ever discover where I am. Alas! I feel how miserable I should be if they ever succeeded in dragging me away from you!"

"You make me tremble. Are you afraid of such a dreadful misfortune here?"

"No, unless I should happen to be seen by someone knowing me."

"Are any such persons likely to be here at present?"

"I think not."

"Then do not let our love take alarm, I trust your fears will never be verified. Only, my darling one, you must be as cheerful as you were in Cesena."

"I shall be more truly so now, dear friend. In Cesena I was miserable, while now I am happy. Do not be afraid of my being sad, for I am of a naturally cheerful disposition."

"I suppose that in Cesena you were afraid of being caught by the officer whom you had left in Rome?"

"Not at all; that officer was my father-in-law, and I am quite certain that he never tried to ascertain where I had gone. He was only too glad to get rid of me. I felt unhappy because I could not bear to be a charge on a man whom I could not love, and with whom I could not even exchange

one thought. Recollect also that I could not find consolation in the idea that I was ministering to his happiness, for I had only inspired him with a passing fancy which he had himself valued at ten sequins. I could not help feeling that his fancy, once gratified, was not likely at his time of life to become a more lasting sentiment, and I could therefore only be a burden to him, for he was not wealthy. Besides, there was a miserable consideration which increased my secret sorrow. I thought myself bound in duty to caress him, and on his side, as he thought that he ought to pay me in the same money, I was afraid of his ruining his health for me, and that idea made me very unhappy. Having no love for each other, we allowed a foolish feeling of regard to make both of us uncomfortable. We lavished, for the sake of a well-meant but false decorum, that which belongs to love alone. Another thing troubled me greatly. I was afraid lest people might suppose that I was a source of profit to him. That idea made me feel the deepest shame, yet, whenever I thought of it, I could not help admitting that such a supposition, however false, was not wanting in probability. It is owing to that feeling that you found me so reserved towards you, for I was afraid that you might harbour that fearful idea if I allowed you to read in my looks the favourable impression which you had made on my heart."

"Then it was not owing to a feeling of self-love?"

"No, I confess it, for you could but judge me as I deserved. I had been guilty of the folly now known to you because my father-in-law intended to bury me in a convent, and that did not suit my taste. But, dearest friend, you must forgive me if I cannot confide even to you the history of my life."

"I respect your secret, darling; you need not fear any intrusion from me on that subject. All we have to do is to love one another, and not to allow any dread of the future to mar our actual felicity."

The next day, after a night of intense enjoyment, I found myself more deeply in love than before, and the next three months were spent by us in an intoxication of delight.

At nine o'clock the next morning the teacher of Italian was announced. I saw a man of respectable appearance, polite, modest, speaking little but well, reserved in his answers, and with the manners of olden times. We conversed, and I could not help laughing when he said, with an air of perfect good faith, that a Christian could only admit the system of Copernicus as a clever hypothesis. I answered that it was the system of God Himself because it was that of nature, and that it was not in Holy Scripture that the laws of science could be learned.

The teacher smiled in a manner which betrayed the Tartufe, and if I had consulted only my own feelings I should have dismissed the poor man, but I thought that he might amuse Henriette and

teach her Italian; after all it was what I wanted from him. My dear wife told him that she would give him six libbra for a lesson of two hours: the libbra of Parma being worth only about threepence, his lessons were not very expensive. She took her first lesson immediately and gave him two sequins, asking him to purchase her some good novels.

Whilst my dear Henriette was taking her lesson, I had some conversation with the dress-maker, in order to ascertain whether she was a relative of mine.

"What does your husband do?" I asked her.

"He is steward to the Marquis of Sissa."

"Is your father still alive?"

"No, sir, he is dead."

"What was his family name?"

"Scotti."

"Are your husband's parents still alive?"

"His father is dead, but his mother is still alive, and resides with her uncle, Canon Casanova."

That was enough. The good woman was my Welsh cousin, and her children were my Welsh nephews. My niece Jeanneton was not pretty, but she appeared to be a good girl. I continued my conversation with the mother, but I changed the topic.

"Are the Parmesans satisfied with being the subjects of a Spanish prince?"

"Satisfied? Well, in that case, we should be easily pleased, for we are now in a regular maze.

Everything is upset, we do not know where we are. Oh! happy times of the house of Farnese, whither have you departed? The day before yesterday I went to the theatre, and Harlequin made everybody roar with laughter. Well, now, fancy, Don Philipo, our new duke, did all he could to remain serious, and when he could not manage it, he would hide his face in his hat so that people should not see that he was laughing, for it is said that laughter ought never to disturb the grave and stiff countenance of an Infante of Spain, and that he would be dishonoured in Madrid if he did not conceal his mirth. What do you think of that? Can such manners suit us? Here we laugh willingly and heartily! Oh! the good Duke Antonio (God rest his soul!) was certainly as great a prince as Duke Philipo, but he did not hide himself from his subjects when he was pleased, and he would sometimes laugh so heartily that he could be heard in the streets. Now we are all in the most fearful confusion, and for the last three months no one in Parma knows what's o'clock."

"Have all the clocks been destroyed?"

"No, but ever since God created the world, the sun has always gone down at half-past five, and at six the bells have always been tolled for the Angelus. All respectable people knew that at that time the candle had to be lit. Now, it is very strange, the sun has gone mad, for he sets every day at a different hour. Our peasants do not know

when they are to come to market. All that is called a regulation but do you know why? Because now everybody knows that dinner is to be eaten at twelve o'clock. A fine regulation, indeed! Under the Farnese we used to eat when we were hungry, and that was much better."

That way of reasoning was certainly singular, but I did not think it sounded foolish in the mouth of a woman of humble rank. It seems to me that a government ought never to destroy ancient customs abruptly, and that innocent errors ought to be corrected only by degrees.

Henriette had no watch. I felt delighted at the idea of offering her such a present, and I went out to purchase one, but after I had bought a very fine watch, I thought of ear-rings, of a fan, and of many other pretty nicknacks. Of course I bought them all at once. She received all those gifts offered by love with a tender delicacy which overjoyed me. She was still with the teacher when I came back.

"I should have been able," he said to me, "to teach your lady heraldry, geography, history, and the use of the globes, but she knows that already. She has received an excellent education."

The teacher's name was Valentin de la Haye. He told me that he was an engineer and professor of mathematics. I shall have to speak of him very often in these Memoirs, and my readers will make his acquaintance by his deeds better than by any portrait I could give of him, so I will merely say

that he was a true Tartufe, a worthy pupil of Escobar.

We had a pleasant dinner with our Hungarian friend. Henriette was still wearing the uniform, and I longed to see her dressed as a woman. She expected a dress to be ready for the next day, and she was already supplied with petticoats and chemises.

Henriette was full of wit and a mistress of repartee. The milliner, who was a native of Lyons, came in one morning, and said in French:

"Madame et Monsieur, j'ai l'honneur de vous souhaiter le bonjour."

"Why," said my friend, "do you not say *Monsieur et madame?"*

"I have always heard that in society the precedence is given to the ladies."

"But from whom do we wish to receive that honour?"

"From gentlemen, of course."

"And do you not see that women would render themselves ridiculous if they did not grant to men the same that they expect from them. If we wish them never to fail in politeness towards us, we must shew them the example."

"Madam," answered the shrewd milliner, "you have taught me an excellent lesson, and I will profit by it. *Monsieur et madame, je suis votre servante."*

This feminine controversy greatly amused me.

Those who do not believe that a woman can make a man happy through the twenty-four hours of the day have never possessed a woman like Henriette. The happiness which filled me, if I can express it in that manner, was much greater when I conversed with her even than when I held her in my arms. She had read much, she had great tact, and her taste was naturally excellent; her judgment was sane, and, without being learned, she could argue like a mathematician, easily and without pretension, and in everything she had that natural grace which is so charming. She never tried to be witty when she said something of importance, but accompanied her words with a smile which imparted to them an appearance of trifling, and brought them within the understanding of all. In that way she would give intelligence even to those who had none, and she won every heart. Beauty without wit offers love nothing but the material enjoyment of its physical charms, whilst witty ugliness captivates by the charms of the mind, and at last fulfils all the desires of the man it has captivated.

Then what was my position during all the time that I possessed my beautiful and witty Henriette? That of a man so supremely happy that I could scarcely realize my felicity!

Let anyone ask a beautiful woman without wit whether she would be willing to exchange a small portion of her beauty for a sufficient dose of wit. If she speaks the truth, she will say, "No, I am

satisfied to be as I am." But why is she satisfied? Because she is not aware of her own deficiency. Let an ugly but witty woman be asked if she would change her wit against beauty, and she will not hesitate in saying no. Why? Because, knowing the value of her wit, she is well aware that it is sufficient by itself to make her a queen in any society.

But a learned woman, a blue-stocking, is not the creature to minister to a man's happiness. Positive knowledge is not a woman's province. It is antipathetic to the gentleness of her nature, to the amenity, to the sweet timidity which are the greatest charms of the fair sex, besides, women never carry their learning beyond certain limits, and the tittle-tattle of blue-stockings can dazzle no one but fools. There has never been one great discovery due to a woman. The fair sex is deficient in that vigorous power which the body lends to the mind, but women are evidently superior to men in simple reasoning, in delicacy of feelings, and in that species of merit which appertains to the heart rather than to the mind.

Hurl some idle sophism at a woman of intelligence. She will not unravel it, but she will not be deceived by it, and, though she may not say so, she will let you guess that she does not accept it. A man, on the contrary, if he cannot unravel the sophism, takes it in a literal sense, and in that respect the learned woman is exactly the same as

man. What a burden a Madame Dacier must be to a man! May God save every honest man from such!

When the new dress was brought, Henriette told me that she did not want me to witness the process of her metamorphosis, and she desired me to go out for a walk until she had resumed her original form. I obeyed cheerfully, for the slightest wish of the woman we love is a law, and our very obedience increases our happiness.

As I had nothing particular to do, I went to a French bookseller in whose shop I made the acquaintance of a witty hunchback, and I must say that a hunchback without wit is a *rara avis;* I have found it so in all countries. Of course it is not wit which gives the hump, for, thank God, all witty men are not humpbacked, but we may well say that, as a general rule, the hump gives wit, for the very small number of hunchbacks who have little or no wit only confirms the rule. The one I was alluding to just now was called Dubois-Chatelcraux. He was a skilful engraver, and director of the Mint of Parma for the Infante, although that prince could not boast of such an institution.

I spent an hour with the witty hunchback, who shewed me several of his engravings, and I returned to the hotel where I found the Hungarian waiting to see Henriette. He did not know that she would that morning receive us in the attire

of her sex. The door was thrown open, and a beautiful, charming woman met us with a courtesy full of grace, which no longer reminded us of the stiffness or of the too great freedom which belong to the military costume. Her sudden appearance certainly astonished us, and we did not know what to say or what to do. She invited us to be seated, looked at the captain in a friendly manner, and pressed my hand with the warmest affection, but without giving way any more to that outward familiarity which a young officer can assume, but which does not suit a well-educated lady. Her noble and modest bearing soon compelled me to put myself in unison with her, and I did so without difficulty, for she was not acting a part, and the way in which she had resumed her natural character made it easy for me to follow her on that ground.

I was gazing at her with admiration, and, urged by a feeling which I did not take time to analyze, I took her hand to kiss it with respect, but, without giving me an oportunity of raising it to my lips, she offered me her lovely mouth. Never did a kiss taste so delicious.

"Am I not then always the same?" said she to me, with deep feeling.

"No, heavenly creature, and it is so true that you are no longer the same in my eyes that I could not now use any familiarity towards you. You are no longer the witty, free young officer who told Madame Querini about the game of Pharaoh. and

about the deposits made to your bank by the captain in so niggardly a manner that they were hardly worth mentioning."

"It is very true that, wearing the costume of my sex, I should never dare to utter such words. Yet, dearest friend, it does not prevent my being your Henriette—that Henriette who has in her life been guilty of three escapades, the last of which would have utterly ruined me if it had not been for you, but which I call a delightful error, since it has been the cause of my knowing you."

Those words moved me so deeply that I was on the point of throwing myself at her feet, to entreat her to forgive me for not having shewn her more respect, but Henriette, who saw the state in which I was, and who wanted to put an end to the pathetic scene, began to shake our poor captain, who sat as motionless as a statue, and as if he had been petrified. He felt ashamed at having treated such a woman as an adventuress, for he knew that what he now saw was not an illusion. He kept looking at her with great confusion, and bowing most respectfully, as if he wanted to atone for his past conduct towards her. As for Henriette, she seemed to say to him, but without the shadow of a reproach,—

"I am glad that you think me worth more than ten sequins."

We sat down to dinner, and from that moment she did the honours of the table with the perfect

ease of a person who is accustomed to fulfil that difficult duty. She treated me like a beloved husband, and the captain like a respected friend. The poor Hungarian begged me to tell her that if he had seen her, as she was now, in Civita Vecchia, when she came out of the tartan, he should never have dreamed of dispatching his cicerone to her room.

"Oh! tell him that I do not doubt it. But is it not strange that a poor little female dress should command more respect than the garb of an officer?"

"Pray do not abuse the officer's costume, for it is to it that I am indebted for my happiness."

"Yes," she said, with a loving smile, "as I owe mine to the *sbirri* of Cesena."

We remained for a long time at the table, and our delightful conversation turned upon no other topic than our mutual felicity. If it had not been for the uneasiness of the poor captain, which at last struck us, we should never have put a stop either to the dinner or to our charming prattle.

CHAPTER II

I ENGAGE A BOX AT THE OPERA, IN SPITE OF HENRIETTE'S RELUCTANCE—M. DUBOIS PAYS US A VISIT AND DINES WITH US; MY DARLING PLAYS HIM A TRICK—HENRIETTE ARGUES ON HAPPINESS —WE CALL ON DUBOIS, AND MY WIFE DISPLAYS HER MARVELLOUS TALENT—M. DUTILLOT—THE COURT GIVES A SPLENDID ENTERTAINMENT IN THE DUCAL GARDENS — A FATAL MEETING — I HAVE AN INTERVIEW WITH M. D'ANTOINE, THE FAVOURITE OF THE INFANTE OF SPAIN

THE happiness I was enjoying was too complete to last long. I was fated to lose it, but I must not anticipate events. Madame de France, wife of the Infante Don Philip, having arrived in Parma, the opera house was opened, and I engaged a private box, telling Henriette that I intended to take her to the theatre every night. She had several times confessed that she had a great passion for music, and I had no doubt that she would be pleased with my proposal. She had never yet seen an Italian opera, and I felt certain that she wished

to ascertain whether the Italian music deserved its universal fame. But I was indeed surprised when she exclaimed,—

"What, dearest! You wish to go every evening to the opera?"

"I think, my love, that, if we did not go, we should give some excuse for scandal-mongers to gossip. Yet, should you not like it, you know that there is no need for us to go. Do not think of me, for I prefer our pleasant chat in this room to the heavenly concert of the seraphs."

"I am passionately fond of music, darling, but I cannot help trembling at the idea of going out."

"If you tremble, I must shudder, but we ought to go to the opera or leave Parma. Let us go to London or to any other place. Give your orders, I am ready to do anything you like."

"Well, take a private box as little exposed as possible."

"How kind you are!"

The box I had engaged was in the second tier, but the theatre being small it was difficult for a pretty woman to escape observation.

I told her so.

"I do not think there is any danger," she answered; "for I have not seen the name of any person of my acquaintance in the list of foreigners which you gave me to read."

Thus did Henriette go to the opera. I had taken care that our box should not be lighted up.

It was an opera-buffa, the music of Burellano was excellent, and the singers were very good.

Henriette made no use of her opera-glass except to look on the stage, and nobody paid any attention to us. As she had been greatly pleased with the *finale* of the second act, I promised to get it for her, and I asked Dubois to procure it for me. Thinking that she could play the harpsichord, I offered to get one, but she told me that she had never touched that instrument.

On the night of the fourth or fifth performance M. Dubois came to our box, and as I did not wish to introduce him to my friend, I only asked what I could do for him. He then handed me the music I had begged him to purchase for me, and I paid him what it had cost, offering him my best thanks. As we were just opposite the ducal box, I asked him, for the sake of saying something, whether he had engraved the portraits of their highnesses. He answered that he had already engraved two medals, and I gave him an order for both, in gold. He promised to let me have them, and left the box. Henriette had not even looked at him, and that was according to all established rules, as I had not introduced him, but the next morning he was announced as we were at dinner. M. de la Haye, who was dining with us, complimented us upon having made the acquaintance of Dubois, and introduced him to his pupil the moment he came into the room. It was then right for Henriette to welcome him, which she did most gracefully.

After she had thanked him for the *partizione,* she begged he would get her some other music, and the artist accepted her request as a favour granted to him.

"Sir," said Dubois to me, "I have taken the liberty of bringing the medals you wished to have; here they are."

On one were the portraits of the Infante and his wife, on the other was engraved only the head of Don Philip. They were both beautifully engraved, and we expressed our just admiration. "The workmanship is beyond all price," said Henriette, "but the gold can be bartered for other gold." "Madam," answered the modest artist, "the medals weight sixteen sequins." She gave him the amount immediately, and invited him to call again at dinner-time. Coffee was just brought in at that moment, and she asked him to take it with us. Before sweetening his cup, she enquired whether he liked his coffee very sweet.

"Your taste, madam," answered the hunchback, gallantly, "is sure to be mine."

"Then you have guessed that I always drink coffee without sugar. I am glad we have that taste in common."

And she gracefully offered him the cup of coffee without sugar. She then helped De la Haye and me, not forgetting to put plenty of sugar in our cups, and she poured out one for herself exactly like the one she had handed to Dubois. It was much ado

for me not to laugh, for my mischievous French-woman, who liked her coffee in the Parisian fashion, that is to say very sweet, was sipping the bitter beverage with an air of delight which compelled the director of the Mint to smile under the infliction. But the cunning hunchback was even with her; accepting the penalty of his foolish compliment, and praising the good quality of the coffee, he boldly declared that it was the only way to taste the delicious aroma of the precious berry.

When Dubois and De la Haye had left us, we both laughed at the trick.

"But," said I to Henriette, "you will be the first victim of your mischief, for whenever he dines with us, you must keep up the joke, in order not to betray yourself."

"Oh! I can easily contrive to drink my coffee well sweetened, and to make him drain the bitter cup."

At the end of one month, Henriette could speak Italian fluently, and it was owing more to the constant practice she had every day with my cousin Jeanneton, who acted as her maid, than to the lessons of Professor de la Haye. The lessons only taught her the rules, and practice is necessary to acquire a language. I have experienced it myself. I learned more French during the too short period that I spent so happily with my charming Henriette than in all the lessons I had taken from Dalacqua.

We had attended the opera twenty times

without making any acquaintance, and our life was indeed supremely happy. I never went out without Henriette, and always in a carriage; we never received anyone, and nobody knew us. Dubois was the only person, since the departure of the good Hungarian, who sometimes dined with us; I do not reckon De la Haye, who was a daily guest at our table. Dubois felt great curiosity about us, but he was cunning and did not shew his curiosity; we were reserved without affectation, and his inquisitiveness was at fault. One day he mentioned to us that the court of the Infante of Parma was very brilliant since the arrival of Madame de France, and that there were many foreigners of both sexes in the city. Then, turning towards Henriette, he said to her,—

"Most of the foreign ladies whom we have here are unknown to us."

"Very likely, many of them would not shew themselves if they were known."

"Very likely, madam, as you say, but I can assure you that, even if their beauty and the richness of their toilet made them conspicious, our sovereigns wish for freedom. I still hope, madam, that we shall have the happiness of seeing you at the court of the duke."

"I do not think so, for, in my opinion, it is superlatively ridiculous for a lady to go to the court without being presented, particularly if she has a right to be so."

The last words, on which Henriette had laid a little more stress than upon the first part of her answer, struck our little hunchback dumb, and my friend, improving her oportunity, changed the subject of conversation.

When he had gone we enjoyed the check she had thus given to the inquisitiveness of our guest, but I told Henriette that, in good conscience, she ought to forgive all those whom she rendered curious, because . . . . she cut my words short by covering me with loving kisses.

Thus supremely happy, and finding in one another constant satisfaction, we would laugh at those morose philosophers who deny that complete happiness can be found on earth.

"What do they mean, darling—those crazy fools—by saying that happiness is not lasting, and how do they understand that word? If they mean everlasting, immortal, unintermitting, of course they are right, but the life of man not being such, happiness, as a natural consequence. cannot be such either. Otherwise, every happiness is lasting for the very reason that it does exist, and to be lasting it requires only to exist. But if by complete felicity they understand a series of varied and never-interrupted pleasures, they are wrong, because, by allowing after each pleasure the calm which ought to follow the enjoyment of it, we have time to realize happiness in its reality. In other words

those necessary periods of repose are a source of true enjoyment, because, thanks to them, we enjoy the delight of recollection which increases twofold the reality of happiness. Man can be happy only when in his own mind he realizes his happiness, and calm is necessary to give full play to his mind; therefore without calm man would truly never be completely happy, and pleasure, in order to be felt, must cease to be active. Then what do they mean by that word lasting?

"Every day we reach a moment when we long for sleep, and, although it be the very likeness of non-existence, can anyone deny that sleep is a pleasure? No, at least it seems to me that it cannot be denied with consistency, for, the moment it comes to us, we give it the preference over all other pleasures, and we are grateful to it only after it has left us.

"Those who say that no one can be happy throughout life speak likewise frivolously. Philosophy teaches the secret of securing that happiness, provided one is free from bodily sufferings. A felicity which would thus last throughout life could be compared to a nosegay formed of a thousand flowers so beautifully, so skillfully blended together, that it would look like one single flower. Why should it be impossible for us to spend here the whole of our life as we have spent the last month, always in good health, always loving one another, without ever feeling any other want or any weari-

ness? Then, to crown that happiness, which would certainly be immense, all that would be wanted would be to die together, in an advanced age, speaking to the last moment of our pleasant recollections. Surely that felicity would have been lasting. Death would not interrupt it, for death would end it. We could not, even then, suppose ourselves unhappy unless we dreaded unhappiness after death, and such an idea strikes me as absurd, for it is a contradiction of the idea of an almighty and fatherly tenderness."

It was thus that my beloved Henriette would often make me spend delightful hours, talking philosophic sentiment. Her logic was better than that of Cicero in his *Tusculan Disputations,* but she admitted that such lasting felicity could exist only between two beings who lived together, and loved each other with constant affection, healthy in mind and in body, enlightened, sufficiently rich, similar in tastes, in disposition, and in temperament. Happy are those lovers who, when their senses require rest, can fall back upon the intellectual enjoyments afforded by the mind! Sweet sleep then comes, and lasts until the body has recovered its general harmony. On awaking, the senses are again active and always ready to resume their action.

The conditions of existence are exactly the same for man as for the universe, I might almost say that between them there is perfect identity, for if we take the universe away, mankind no longer

exists, and if we take mankind away, there is no longer an universe; who could realize the idea of the existence of inorganic matter? Now, without that idea, *nihil est,* since the idea is the essence of everything, and since man alone has ideas. Besides, if we abstract the species, we can no longer imagine the existence of matter, and *vice versâ.*

I derived from Henriette as great happiness as that charming woman derived from me. We loved one another with all the strength of our faculties, and we were everything to each other. She would often repeat those pretty lines of the good La Fontaine:

Soyez-vous l'un à l'autre un monde toujours beau,
Toujours divers, toujours nouveau;
Tenez-vous lieu de tout; comptez pour rien le reste.

And we did not fail to put the advice into practice, for never did a minute of ennui or of weariness, never did the slightest trouble, disturb our bliss.

The day after the close of the opera, Dubois, who was dining with us, said that on the following day he was entertaining the two first artists, *primo cantatore* and *prima cantatrice,* and added that, if we liked to come, we would hear some of their best pieces, which they were to sing in a lofty hall of his country-house particularly adapted to the display of the human voice. Henriette thanked him warmly, but she said that, her health being very delicate, she could not engage herself beforehand, and she spoke of other things.

When we were alone, I asked her why she had refused the pleasure offered by Dubois.

"I should accept his invitation," she answered, "and with delight, if I were not afraid of meeting at his house some person who might know me, and would destroy the happiness I am now enjoying with you."

"If you have any fresh motive for dreading such an occurrence, you are quite right, but if it is only a vague, groundless fear, my love, why should you deprive yourself of a real and innocent pleasure? If you knew how pleased I am when I see you enjoy yourself, and particularly when I witness your ecstacy in listening to fine music!"

"Well, darling, I do not want to shew myself less brave than you. We will go immediately after dinner. The artists will not sing before. Besides, as he does not expect us, he is not likely to have invited any person curious to speak to me. We will go without giving him notice of our coming, without being expected, and as if we wanted to pay him a friendly visit. He told us that he would be at his country-house, and Caudagna knows where it is."

Her reasons were a mixture of prudence and of love. two feelings which are seldom blended together. My answer was to kiss her with as much admiration as tenderness, and the next day at four o'clock in the afternoon we paid our visit to M. Dubois. We were much surprised, for we

found him alone with a very pretty girl, whom he presented to us as his niece.

"I am delighted to see you," he said, "but as I did not expect to see you I altered my arrangements, and instead of the dinner I had intended to give I have invited my friends to supper. I hope you will not refuse me the honour of your company. The two *virtuosi* will soon be here."

We were compelled to accept his invitation.

"Will there be many guests?" I enquired.

"You will find yourselves in the midst of people worthy of you," he answered, triumphantly. "I am only sorry that I have not invited any ladies."

This polite remark, which was intended for Henriette, made her drop him a cursty, which she accompanied with a smile. I was pleased to read contentment on her countenance, but, alas! she was concealing the painful anxiety which she felt acutely. Her noble mind refused to shew any uneasiness, and I could not guess her inmost thoughts because I had no idea that she had anything to fear.

I should have thought and acted differently if I had known all her history. Instead of remaining in Parma I should have gone with her to London, and I know now that she would have been delighted to go there.

The two artists arrived soon afterwards; they were the *primo cantatore* Laschi, and the *prima donna*

Baglioni, then a very pretty woman. The other guests soon followed; all of them were Frenchmen and Spaniards of a certain age. No introductions took place, and I read the tact of the witty hunchback in the omission, but as all the guests were men used to the manners of the court, that neglect of etiquette did not prevent them from paying every honour to my lovely friend, who received their compliments with that ease and good breeding which are known only in France, and even there only in the highest society, with the exception, however, of a few French provinces in which the nobility, wrongly called good society, shew rather too openly the haughtiness which is characteristic of that class.

The concert began by a magnificent symphony, after which Laschi and Baglioni sang a duet with great talent and much taste. They were followed by a pupil of the celebrated Vandini, who played a *concerto* on the violoncello, and was warmly applauded.

The applause had not yet ceased when Henriette, leaving her seat, went up to the young artist, and told him, with modest confidence, as she took the violoncello from him, that she could bring out the beautiful tone of the instrument still better. I was struck with amazement. She took the young man's seat, placed the violoncello between her knees, and begged the leader of the orchestra to begin the *concerto again.* The deepest silence prevailed. I was

trembling all over, and almost fainting. Fortunately every look was fixed upon Henriette, and nobody thought of me. Nor was she looking towards me, she would not have then ventured even one glance, for she would have lost courage, if she had raised her beautiful eyes to my face. However, not seeing her disposing herself to play, I was beginning to imagine that she had only been indulging in a jest, when she suddenly made the strings resound. My heart was beating with such force that I thought I should drop down dead.

But let the reader imagine my situation when, the *concerto* being over, well-merited applause burst from every part of the room! The rapid change from extreme fear to excessive pleasure brought on an excitement which was like a violent fever. The applause did not seem to have any effect upon Henriette, who, without raising her eyes from the notes which she saw for the first time, played six pieces with the greatest perfection. As she rose from her seat, she did not thank the guests for their applause, but, addressing the young artist with affability, she told him, with a sweet smile, that she had never played on a finer instrument. Then, curtsying to the audience, she said,—

"I entreat your forgiveness for a movement of vanity which has made me encroach on your patience for half an hour."

The nobility and grace of this remark com-

pletely upset me, and I ran out to weep like a child, in the garden where no one could see me.

"Who is she, this Henriette?" I said to myself, my heart beating, and my eyes swimming with tears of emotion, "what is this treasure I have in my possession?"

My happiness was so immense that I felt myself unworthy of it.

Lost in these thoughts which enhanced the pleasure of my tears, I should have stayed for a long time in the garden if Dubois had not come out to look for me. He felt anxious about me, owing to my sudden disappearance, and I quieted him by saying that a slight giddiness had compelled me to come out to breathe the fresh air.

Before re-entering the room, I had time to dry my tears, but my eyelids were still red. Henriette, however, was the only one to take notice of it, and she said to me,—

"I know, my darling, why you went into the garden."

She knew me so well that she could easily guess the impression made on my heart by the evening's occurrence.

Dubois had invited the most amiable noblemen of the court, and his supper was dainty and well arranged. I was seated opposite Henriette who was, as a matter of course, monopolizing the general attention, but she would have met with the same success if she had been surrounded by a circle

of ladies whom she would certainly have thrown into the shade by her beauty, her wit, and the distinction of her manners. She was the charm of that supper by the animation she imparted to the conversation. M. Dubois said nothing, but he was proud to have such a lovely guest in his house. She contrived to say a few gracious words to everyone, and was shrewd enough never to utter something witty without making me take a share in it. On my side, I openly shewed my submissiveness, my deference, and my respect for that divinity, but it was all in vain. She wanted everybody to know that I was her lord and master. She might have been taken for my wife, but my behaviour to her rendered such a supposition improbable.

The conversation having fallen on the respective merits of the French and Spanish nations, Dubois was foolish enough to ask Henriette to which she gave preference.

It would have been difficult to ask a more indiscreet question, considering that the company was composed almost entirely of Frenchmen and Spaniards in about equal proportion. Yet my Henriette turned the difficulty so cleverly that the Frenchmen would have liked to be Spaniards, and *vice versâ*. Dubois, nothing daunted, begged her to say what she thought of the Italians. The question made me tremble. A certain M. de la Combe, who was seated near me, shook his head in token of

disapprobation, but Henriette did not try to elude the question.

"What can I say about the Italians," she answered, "I know only one? If I am to judge them all from that one my judgment must certainly be most favourable to them, but one single example is not sufficient to establish the rule."

It was impossible to give a better answer, but as my readers may well imagine, I did not appear to have heard it, and being anxious to prevent any more indiscreet questions from Dubois I turned the conversation into a different channel.

The subject of music was discussed, and a Spaniard asked Henriette whether she could play any other instrument besides the viloncello.

"No," she answered, "I never felt any inclination for any other. I learned the violoncello at the convent to please my mother, who can play it pretty well, and without an order from my father, sanctioned by the bishop, the abbess would never have given me permission to practise it."

"What objection could the abbess make?"

"That devout spouse of our Lord pretended that I could not play that instrument without assuming an indecent position."

At this the Spanish guests bit their lips, but the Frenchmen laughed heartily, and did not spare their epigrams against the over-particular abbess.

After a short silence, Henriette rose, and we all followed her example. It was the signal for

breaking up the party, and we soon took our leave.

I longed to find myself alone with the idol of my soul. I asked her a hundred questions without waiting for the answers.

"Ah! you were right, my own Henriette, when you refused to go to that concert, for you knew that you would raise many enemies against me. I am certain that all those men hate me, but what do I care? You are my universe! Cruel darling, you almost killed me with your violoncello, because, having no idea of your being a musician, I thought you had gone mad, and when I heard you I was compelled to leave the room in order to weep undisturbed. My tears relieved my fearful oppression. Oh! I entreat you to tell me what other talents you possess. Tell me candidly, for you might kill me if you brought them out unexpectedly, as you have done this evening."

"I have no other accomplishments, my best beloved. I have emptied my bag all at once. Now you know your Henriette entirely. Had you not chanced to tell me about a month ago that you had no taste for music, I would have told you that I could play the violoncello remarkably well, but if I had mentioned such a thing, I know you well enough to be certain that you would have bought an instrument immediately, and I could not, dearest, find pleasure in anything that would weary you."

The very next morning she had an excellent

violoncello, and, far from wearying me, each time she played she caused me a new and greater pleasure. I believe that it would be impossible even to a man disliking music not to become passionately fond of it, if that art were practised to perfection by the woman he adores.

The *vox humana* of the violoncello, the king of instruments, went to my heart every time that my beloved Henriette performed upon it. She knew I loved to hear her play, and every day she afforded me that pleasure. Her talent delighted me so much that I proposed to her to give some concerts, but she was prudent enough to refuse my proposal. But in spite of all her prudence we had no power to hinder the decrees of fate.

The fatal hunchback came the day after his fine supper to thank us and to receive our well-merited praises of his concert, his supper, and the distinction of his guests.

"I foresee, madam," he said to Henriette, "all the difficulty I shall have in defending myself against the prayers of all my friends, who will beg of me to introduce them to you."

"You need not have much trouble on that score: you know that I never receive anyone."

Dubois did not again venture upon speaking of introducing any friend.

On the same day I received a letter from young Capitani, in which he informed me that, being the owner of St. Peter's knife and sheath, he

had called on Franzia with two learned magicians who had promised to raise the treasure out of the earth, and that to his great surprise Franzia had refused to receive him. He entreated me to write to the worthy fellow, and to go to him myself if I wanted to have my share of the treasure. I need not say that I did not comply with his wishes, but I can vouch for the real pleasure I felt in finding that I had succeeded in saving that honest and simple farmer from the impostors who would have ruined him.

One month was gone since the great supper given by Dubois. We had passed it in all the enjoyment which can be derived both from the senses and the mind, and never had one single instant of weariness caused either of us to be guilty of that sad symptom of misery which is called a yawn. The only pleasure we took out of doors was a drive outside of the city when the weather was fine. As we never walked in the streets, and never frequented any public place, no one had sought to make our acquaintance, or at least no one had found an opportunity of doing so, in spite of all the curiosity excited by Henriette amongst the persons whom we had chanced to meet, particularly at the house of Dubois. Henriette had become more courageous, and I more confident, when we found that she had not been recognized by anyone either at that supper or at

the theatre. She only dreaded persons belonging to the high nobility.

One day as we were driving outside the Gate of Colorno. we met the duke and the duchess who were returning to Parma. Immediately after their carriage another vehicle drove along, in which was Dubois with a nobleman unknown to us. Our carriage had only gone a few yards from theirs when one of our horses broke down. The companion of Dubois immediately ordered his coachman to stop in order to send to our assistance. Whilst the horse was raised again, he came politely to our carriage, and paid some civil compliment to Henriette. M. Dubois, always a shrewd courtier and anxious to shew off at the expense of others, lost no time in troducing him as M. Dutillot, the French ambassador. My sweetheart gave the conventional bow. The horse being all right again, we proceeded on our road after thanking the gentlemen for their courtesy. Such an every-day occurrence could not be expected to have any serious consequences, but alas! the most important events are often the result of very trifling circumstances!

The next day, Dubois breakfasted with us. He told us frankly that M. Dutillot had been delighted at the fortunate chance which had afforded him an opportunity of making our acquaintance, and that he had entreated him to ask our permission to call on us.

"On madam or on me?" I asked at once.

"On both."

"Very well, but one at a time. Madam, as you know, has her own room and I have mine."

"Yes, but they are so near each other!"

"Granted, yet I must tell you that, as far as I am concerned, I should have much pleasure in waiting upon his excellency if he should ever wish to communicate with me, and you will oblige me by letting him know it. As for madam, she is here, speak to her, my dear M. Dubois, for I am only her very humble servant."

Henriette assumed an air of cheerful politeness, and said to him,—

"Sir, I beg you will offer my thanks to M. Dutillot, and enquire from him whether he knows me."

"I am certain, madam," said the hunchback, "that he does not."

"You see he does not know me, and yet he wishes to call on me. You must agree with me that if I accepted his visits I should give him a singular opinion of my character. Be good enough to tell him that, although known to no one and knowing no one, I am not an adventuress, and therefore I must decline the honour of his visits."

Dubois felt that he had taken a false step, and remained silent. We never asked him how the ambassador had received our refusal.

Three weeks after the last occurrence, the ducal court residing then at Colorno, a great

entertainment was given in the gardens which were to be illuminated all night. Everybody had permission to walk about the gardens. Dubois, the fatal hunchback appointed by destiny, spoke so much of that festival, that we took a fancy to see it. Always the same old story of Adam's apple. Dubois accompanied us. We went to Colorno the day before the entertainment, and put up at an inn.

In the evening we walked through the gardens, in which we happened to meet the ducal family and suite. According to the etiquette of the French court, Madame de France was the first to curtsy to Henriette, without stopping. My eyes fell upon a gentleman walking by the side of Don Louis, who was looking at my friend very attentively. A few minutes after, as we were retracing our steps, we came across the same gentleman who, after bowing respectfully to us, took Dubois aside. They conversed together for a quarter of an hour, following us all the time, and we were passing out of the gardens, when the gentleman, coming forward, and politely apologizing to me, asked Henriette whether he had the honour to be known to her.

"I do not recollect having ever had the honour of seeing you before."

"That is enough, madam, and I entreat you to forgive me."

Dubois informed us that the gentleman was the intimate friend of the Infante Don Louis, and that, believing he knew madam, he had begged to be

introduced. Dubois had answered that her name was D'Arci, and that, if he was known to the lady, he required no introduction. M. d'Antoine said that the name of D'Arci was unknown to him, and that he was afraid of making a mistake. "In that state of doubt," added Dubois, "and wishing to clear it, he introduced himself, but now he must see that he was mistaken."

After supper, Henriette appeared anxious. I asked her whether she had only pretended not to know M. d'Antoine.

"No, dearest, I can assure you. I know his name which belongs to an illustrious family of Provence, but I have never seen him before."

"Perhaps he may know you?"

"He might have seen me, but I am certain that he never spoke to me, or I would have recollected him."

"That meeting causes me great anxiety, and it seems to have troubled you."

"I confess it has disturbed my mind."

"Let us leave Parma at once and proceed to Genoa. We will go to Venice as soon as my affairs there are settled."

"Yes, my dear friend, we shall then feel more comfortable. But I do not think we need be in any hurry."

We returned to Parma, and two days afterwards my servant handed me a letter, saying that the footman who had brought it was waiting in the ante-room.

"This letter," I said to Henriette, "troubles me."

She took it, and after she had read it she gave it back to me, saying,—

"I think M. d'Antoine is a man of honour, and I hope that we have nothing to fear."

The letter ran as follows:

"Either at your hotel or at my residence, or at any other place you may wish to appoint, I entreat you, sir, to give me an opportunity of conversing with you on a subject which must be of the greatest importance to you.

"I have the honour to be, etc.

"D'Antoine."

It was addressed to M. Farusi.

"I think I must see him," I said, "but where?"

"Neither here nor at his residence, but in the ducal gardens. Your answer must name only the place and the hour of the meeting."

I wrote to M. d'Antoine that I would see him at half-past eleven in the ducal gardens, only requesting him to appoint another hour in case mine was not convenient to him.

I dressed myself at once in order to be in good time, and meanwhile we both endeavoured, Henriette and I, to keep a cheerful countenance, but we could not silence our sad forebodings. I was exact to my appointment and found M. d'Antoine waiting for me. As soon as we were together, he said to me,—

"I have been compelled, sir, to beg from you the favour of an interview, because I could not imagine any surer way to get this letter to Madame d'Arci's hands. I entreat you to deliver it to her, and to excuse me if I give it you sealed. Should I be mistaken, my letter will not even require an answer, but should I be right, Madame d'Arci alone can judge whether she ought to communicate it to you. That is my reason for giving it to you sealed. If you are truly her friend, the contents of that letter must be as interesting to you as to her. May I hope, sir, that you will be good enough to deliver it to her?"

"Sir, on my honour I will do it."

We bowed respectfully to each other, and parted company. I hurried back to the hotel.

CHAPTER III

HENRIETTE RECEIVES THE VISIT OF M. D'ANTOINE—I ACCOMPANY HER AS FAR AS GENEVA AND THEN I LOSE HER—I CROSS THE ST. BERNARD, AND RETURN TO PARMA—A LETTER FROM HENRIETTE—MY DESPAIR—DE LA HAYE BECOMES ATTACHED TO ME—UNPLEASANT ADVENTURE WITH AN ACTRESS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES—I TURN A THOROUGH BIGOT—BAVOIS—I MYSTIFY A BRAGGING OFFICER

As soon as I had reached our apartment, my heart bursting with anxiety, I repeated to Henriette every word spoken by M. d'Antoine, and delivered his letter which contained four pages of writing. She read it attentively with visible emotion, and then she said,—

"Dearest friend, do not be offended, but the honour of two families does not allow of my imparting to you the contents of this letter. I am compelled to receive M. d'Antoine, who represents himself as being one of my relatives."

"Ah!" I exclaimed, "this is the beginning of the end! What a dreadful thought! I am near the end of a felicity which was too great to last!

Wretch that I have been! Why did I tarry so long in Parma? What fatal blindness! Of all the cities in the whole world, except France, Parma was the only one I had to fear, and it is here that I have brought you, when I could have taken you anywhere else, for you had no will but mine! I am all the more guilty that you never concealed your fears from me. Why did I introduce that fatal Dubois here? Ought I not to have guessed that his curiosity would sooner or later prove injurious to us? And yet I cannot condemn that curiosity, for it is, alas! a natural feeling. I can only accuse all the perfections which Heaven has bestowed upon you!—perfections which have caused my happiness, and which will plunge me in an abyss of despair, for, alas! I foresee a future of fearful misery."

"I entreat you, dearest, to foresee nothing, and to calm yourself. Let us avail ourselves of all our reason in order to prove ourselves superior to circumstances, whatever they made be. I cannot answer this letter, but you must write to M. d'Antoine to call here to-morrow and to send up his name."

"Alas! you compel me to perform a painful task."

"You are my best, my only friend; I demand nothing, I impose no task upon you, but can you refuse me?"

"No, never, no matter what you ask. Dispose of me, I am yours in life and in death."

"I knew what you would answer. You must be with me when M. d'Antoine calls, but after a few minutes given to etiquette, will you find some pretext to go to your room, and leave us alone? M. d'Antoine knows all my history; he knows in what I have done wrong, in what I have been right; as a man of honour, as my relative, he must shelter me from all affront. He shall not do anything against my will, and if he attempts to deviate from the conditions I will dictate to him, I will refuse to go to France, I will follow you anywhere, and devote to you the remainder of my life. Yet, my darling, recollect that some fatal circumstances may compel us to consider our separation as the wisest course to adopt, that we must husband all our courage to adopt it, if necessary, and to endeavour not to be too unhappy. Have confidence in me, and be quite certain that I shall take care to reserve for myself the small portion of happiness which I can be allowed to enjoy without the man who alone has won all my devoted love. You will have, I trust, and I expect it from your generous soul, the same care of your future, and I feel certain that you must succeed. In the mean time, let us drive away all the sad forebodings which might darken the hours we have yet before us."

"Ah! why did we not go away immediately after we had met that accursed favourite of the Infante!"

"We might have made matters much worse;

for in that case M. d'Antoine might have made up his mind to give my family a proof of his zeal by instituting a search to discover our place of residence, and I should then have been exposed to violent proceedings which you would not have endured. It would have been fatal to both of us."

I did everything she asked me. From that moment our love became sad, and sadness is a disease which gives the death-blow to affection. We would often remain a whole hour opposite one another without exchanging a single word, and our sighs would be heard whatever we did to hush them.

The next day, when M. d'Antoine called, I followed exactly the instructions she had given me, and for six mortal hours I remained alone, pretending to write.

The door of my room was open, and a large looking-glass allowed us to see each other. They spent those six hours in writing, occasionally stopping to talk of I do not know what, but their conversation was evidently a decisive one. The reader can easily realize how much I suffered during that long torture, for I could expect nothing but the total wreck of my happiness.

As soon as the terrible M. d'Antoine had taken leave of her, Henriette came to me, and observing that her eyes were red I heaved a deep sigh, but she tried to smile.

"Shall we go away to-morrow, dearest?"

"Oh! yes, I am ready. Where do you wish me to take you?"

"Anywhere you like, but we must be here in a fortnight."

"Here! Oh, fatal illusion!"

"Alas! it is so. I have promised to be here to receive the answer to a letter I have just written. We have no violent proceedings to fear, but I cannot bear to remain in Parma."

"Ah! I curse the hour which brought us to this city. Would you like to go to Milan?"

"Yes."

"As we are unfortunately compelled to come back, we may as well take with us Caudagna and his sister."

"As you please."

"Let me arrange everything. I will order a carriage for them, and they will take charge of your violoncello. Do you not think that you ought to let M. d'Antoine know where we are going?"

"No, it seems to me, on the contrary, that I need not account to him for any of my proceedings. So much the worse for him if he should, even for one moment, doubt my word."

The next morning, we left Parma, taking only what we wanted for an absence of a fortnight. We arrived in Milan without accident, but both very sad, and we spent the following fifteen days in constant *tête-à-tête,* without speaking to any one, except to the landlord of the hotel and to a

dressmaker. I presented my beloved Henriette with a magnificent pelisse made of lynx fur—a present which she prized highly.

Out of delicacy, she had never enquired about my means, and I felt grateful to her for that reserve. I was very careful to conceal from her the fact that my purse was getting very light. When we came back to Parma I had only three or four hundred sequins.

The day after our return M. d'Antoine invited himself to dine with us, and after we had drunk coffee, I left him alone with Henriette. Their interview was as long as the first, and our separation was decided. She informed me of it, immediately after the departure of M. d'Antoine, and for a long time we remained folded in each other's arms, silent, and blending our bitter tears.

"When shall I have to part from you, my beloved, alas! too much beloved one?"

"Be calm, dearest, only when we reach Geneva, whither you are going to accompany me. Will you try to find me a respectable maid by to-morrow? She will accompany me from Geneva to the place where I am bound to go."

"Oh! then, we shall spend a few days more together! I know no one but Dubois whom I could trust to procure a good *femme-de-chambre;* only I do not want him to learn from her what you might not wish him to know."

"That will not be the case, for I will take another maid as soon as I am in France."

Three days afterwards, Dubois, who had gladly undertaken the commission, presented to Henriette a woman already somewhat advanced in years, pretty well dressed and respectable-looking, who, being poor, was glad of an oportunity of going back to France, her native country. Her husband, an old military officer, had died a few months before, leaving her totally unprovided for. Henriette engaged her, and told her to keep herself ready to start whenever M. Dubois should give her notice. The day before the one fixed for our departure, M. d'Antoine dined with us, and, before taking leave of us, he gave Henriette a sealed letter for Geneva.

We left Parma late in the evening, and stopped only two hours in Turin, in order to engage a man-servant whose services we required as far as Geneva. The next day we ascended Mont Cenis in sedan-chairs, and we descended to the Novalaise in montain-sledges. On the fifth day we reached Geneva, and we put up at the Hotel des Balances. The next morning, Henriette gave me a letter for the banker Tronchin, who, when he had read it, told me that he would call himself at the hotel, and bring me one thousand louis d'or.

I came back and we sat down to dinner. We had not finished our meal when the banker was announced. He had brought the thousand louis

d'or, and told Henriette that he would give her two men whom he could recommend in every way.

She answered that she would leave Geneva as soon as she had the carriage which he was to provide for her, according to the letter I had delivered to him. He promised that everything would be ready for the following day, and he left us. It was indeed a terrible moment! Grief almost benumbed us both. We remained motionless, speechless, wrapped up in the most profound despair.

I broke that sad silence to tell her that the carriage which M. Tronchin would provide could not possibly be as comfortable and as safe as mine, and I entreated her to take it, assuring her that by accepting it she would give me a last proof of her affection.

"I will take in exchange, my dearest love, the carriage sent by the banker."

"I accept the change, darling," she answered, "it will be a great consolation to possess something which has belonged to you."

As she said these words, she slipped in my pocket five rolls containing each one hundred louis d'or—a slight consolation for my heart, which was almost broken by our cruel separation! During the last twenty-four hours we could boast of no other eloquence but that which finds expression in tears, in sobs, and in those hackneyed but energetic exclamations, which two happy lovers are sure to address to reason, when in its sternness it compels

them to part from one another in the very height of their felicity. Henriette did not endeavour to lure me with any hope for the future, in order to allay my sorrow! Far from that, she said to me,—

"Once we are parted by fate, my best and only friend, never enquire after me, and, should chance throw you in my way, do not appear to know me."

She gave me a letter for M. d'Antoine, without asking me whether I intended to go back to Parma, but, even if such had not been my intention, I should have determined at once upon returning to that city. She likewise entreated me not to leave Geneva until I had received a letter which she promised to write to me from the first stage on her journey. She started at day-break, having with her a maid, a footman on the box of the carriage, and being preceded by a courier on horseback. I followed her with my eyes as long as I could see her carriage, and I was still standing on the same spot long after my eyes had lost sight of it. All my thoughts were wrapped up in the beloved object I had lost for ever. The world was a blank!

I went back to my room, ordered the waiter not to disturb me until the return of the horses which had drawn Henriette's carriage, and I lay down on my bed in the hope that sleep would for a time silence a grief which tears could not drown.

The postillion who had driven Henriette did

not return till the next day; he had gone as far as Châtillon. He brought me a letter in which I found one single word: *Adieu!* He told me that they had reached Châtillon without accident, and that the lady had immediately continued her journey towards Lyons. As I could not leave Geneva until the following day, I spent alone in my room some of the most melancholy hours of my life. I saw on one of the panes of glass of a window these words which she had traced with the point of a diamond I had given her: "You will forget Henriette." That prophecy was not likely to afford me any consolation. But had she attached its full meaning to the word *"forget?"* No; she could only mean that time would at last heal the deep wounds of my heart, and she ought not to have made it deeper by leaving behind her those words which sounded like a reproach. No, I have not forgotten her, for even now, when my head is covered with white hair, the recollection of her is still a source of happiness for my heart! When I think that in my old age I derive happiness only from my recollections of the past, I find that my long life must have counted more bright than dark days, and offering my thanks to God, the Giver of all, I congratulate myself, and confess that life is a great blessing.

The next day I set off again for Italy with a servant recommended by M. Tronchin, and although the season was not favourable I took

the road over Mont St. Bernard, which I crossed in three days, with seven mules carrying me, my servant, my luggage, and the carriage sent by the banker to the beloved woman now for ever lost to me. One of the advantages of a great sorrow is that nothing else seems painful. It is a sort of despair which is not without some sweetness. During that journey I never felt either hunger or thirst, or the cold which is so intense in that part of the Alps that the whole of nature seems to turn to ice, or the fatigue inseparable from such a difficult and dangerous journey.

I arrived in Parma in pretty good health, and took up my quarters at a small inn, in the hope that in such a place I should not meet any acquaintance of mine. But I was much disappointed, for I found in that inn M. de la Haye, who had a room next to mine. Surprised at seeing me, he paid me a long compliment, trying to make me speak, but I eluded his curiosity by telling him that I was tired, and that we would see each other again.

On the following day I called upon M. d'Antoine, and delivered the letter which Henriette had written to him. He opened it in my presence, and finding another to my address enclosed in his, he handed it to me without reading it, although it was not sealed. Thinking, however, that it might have been Henriette's intention that he should read it because it was open, he asked my per-

mission to do so, which I granted with pleasure as soon as I had myself perused it. He handed it back to me after he had read it, telling me very feelingly that I could in everything rely upon him and upon his influence and credit.

Here is Henriette's letter:

"It is I, dearest and best friend, who have been compelled to abandon you, but do not let your grief be increased by any thought of my sorrow. Let us be wise enough to suppose that we have had a happy dream, and not to complain of destiny, for never did so beautiful a dream last so long! Let us be proud of the consciousness that for three months we gave one another the most perfect felicity. Few human beings can boast of so much! Let us swear never to forget one another, and to often remember the happy hours of our love, in order to renew them in our souls, which, although divided, will enjoy them as acutely as if our hearts were beating one against the other. Do not make any enquiries about me, and if chance should let you know who I am, forget it for ever. I feel certain that you will be glad to hear that I have arranged my affairs so well that I shall, for the remainder of my life, be as happy as I can possibly be without you, dear friend, by my side. I do not know who you are, but I am certain that no one in the world knows you better than I do. I shall not have another lover as long as I live, but I do not wish you to imitate me. On the

contrary I hope that you will love again, and I trust that a good fairy will bring along your path another Henriette. Farewell . . . . farewell."

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I met that adorable woman, fifteen years later; the reader will see where and how, when we come to that period of my life.

* * * * * *

I went back to my room, careless of the future, broken down by the deepest of sorrows, I locked myself in, and went to bed. I felt so low in spirits that I was stunned. Life was not a burden, but only because I did not give a thought to life. In fact I was in a state of complete apathy, moral and physical. Six years later I found myself in a similar predicament, but that time love was not the cause of my sorrow; it was the horrible and too famous prison of The Leads, in Venice.

I was not much better either in 1768, when I was lodged in the prison of Buen Retiro, in Madrid, but I must not anticipate events.

At the end of twenty-four hours, my exhaustion was very great, but I did not find the sensation disagreeable, and, in the state of mind in which I was then, I was pleased with the idea that, by increasing, that weakness would at last kill me. I was delighted to see that no one disturbed me to offer me some food, and I congratulated myself upon having dismissed my servant. Twenty-four

more hours passed by, and my weakness became complete inanition.

I was in that state when De la Haye knocked at my door. I would not have answered if he had not said that someone insisted upon seeing me. I got out of bed, and, scarcely able to stand, I opened my door; after which I got into bed again.

"There is a stranger here," he said, "who, being in want of a carriage, offers to buy yours."

"I do not want to sell it."

"Excuse me if I have disturbed you, but you look ill."

"Yes, I wish to be left alone."

"What is the matter with you?"

Coming near my bed, he took my hand, and found my pulse extremely low and weak.

"What did you eat yesterday?"

"I have eaten nothing, thank God! for two days."

Guessing the real state of things, De la Haye became anxious, and entreated me to take some broth. He threw so much kindness, so much unction, into his entreaties that, through weakness and weariness, I allowed myself to be persuaded. Then, without ever mentioning the name of Henriette, he treated me to a sermon upon the life to come, upon the vanity of the things of this life which we are foolish enough to prefer, and upon the necessity of respecting our existence, which does not belong to us.

I was listening without answering one word, but, after all, I was listening, and De la Haye, perceiving his advantage, would not leave me, and ordered dinner. I had neither the will nor the strength to resist, and when the dinner was served, I ate something. The De la Haye saw that he had conquered, and for the remainder of the day devoted himself to amusing me by his cheerful conversation.

The next day the tables were turned, for it was I who invited him to keep me company and to dine with me. It seemed to me that I had not lost a particle of my sadness, but life appeared to me once more preferable to death, and, thinking that I was indebted to him for the preservation of my life, I made a great friend of him. My readers will see presently that my affection for him went very far, and they will, like me, marvel at the cause of that friendship, and at the means through which it was brought about.

Three or four days afterwards, Dubois, who had been informed of everything by De la Haye, called on me, and persuaded me to go out. I went to the theatre, where I made the acquaintance of several Corsican officers, who had served in France, in the Royal Italian regiment. I also met a young man from Sicily, named Paterno, the wildest and most heedless fellow it was possible to see. He was in love with an actress who made a fool of him. He amused me with the enumeration of all her adorable

qualities, and of all the cruelties she was practising upon him, for, although she received him at all hours, she repulsed him harshly whenever he tried to steal the slightest favour. In the mean time, she ruined him by making him pay constantly for excellent dinners and suppers, which were eaten by her family, but which did not advance him one inch towards the fulfilment of his wishes.

He succeeded at last in exciting my curiosity. I examined the actress on the stage, and finding that she was not without beauty I expressed a wish to know her. Paterno was delighted to introduce me to her.

I found that she was of tolerably easy virtue, and, knowing that she was very far from rolling in riches, I had no doubt that fifteen or twenty sequins would be quite sufficient to make her compliant. I communicated my thoughts to Paterno, but he laughed and told me that, if I dared to make such a proposition to her, she would certainly shut her door against me. He named several officers whom she had refused to receive again, because they had made similar offers. "Yet," added the young man, "I wish you would make the attempt, and tell me the result candidly." I felt piqued, and promised to do it.

I paid her a visit in her dressing-room at the theatre, and as she happened during our conversation to praise the beauty of my watch, I told her that she could easily obtain possession of it, and I

said at what price. She answered, according to the catechism of her profession, that an honourable man had no right to make such an offer to a respectable girl.

"I offer only one ducat," said I, "to those who are not respectable." And I left her.

When I told Paterno what had occurred, he fairly jumped for joy, but I knew what to think of it all, for *cosi sono tutte,* and in spite of all his entreaties, I declined to be present at his suppers, which were far from amusing, and gave the family of the actress an opportunity of laughing at the poor fool who was paying for them.

Seven or eight days afterwards, Paterno told me that the actress had related the affair to him exactly in the same words which I had used, and she had added that, if I had ceased my visits, it was only because I was afraid of her taking me at my word in case I should renew my proposal. I commissioned him to tell her that I would pay her another visit, not to renew my offer, but to shew my contempt for any proposal she might make to me herself.

The heedless fellow fulfilled his commission so well that the actress, feeling insulted, told him that she dared me to call on her. Perfectly determined to shew that I despised her, I went to her dressing-room the same evening, after the second act of a play in which she had not to appear again. She dismissed those who were with her, saying that

she wanted to speak with me, and, after she had bolted the door, she sat down gracefully on my knees, asking me whether it was true that I despised her so much.

In such a position a man has not the courage to insult a woman, and, instead of answering, I set to work at once, without meeting even with that show of resistance which sharpens the appetite. In spite of that, dupe as I always was of a feeling truly absurd when an intelligent man has to deal with such creatures, I gave her twenty sequins, and I confess that it was paying dearly for very smarting regrets. We both laughed at the stupidity of Paterno, who did not seem to know how such challenges generally end.

I saw the unlucky son of Sicily the next morning, and I told him that, having found the actress very dull, I would not see her again. Such was truly my intention, but a very important reason, which nature took care to explain to me three days afterwards, compelled me to keep my word through a much more serious motive than a simple dislike for the woman.

However, although I was deeply grieved to find myself in such a disgraceful position, I did not think I had any right to complain. On the contrary, I considered that my misfortune to be a just and well-deserved punishment for having abandoned myself to a Laïs, after I had enjoyed the felicity of possessing a woman like Henriette.

My disease was not a case within the province of empirics, and I bethought myself of confiding in M. de la Haye who was then dining every day with me, and made no mystery of his poverty. He placed me in the hands of a skilful surgeon, who was at the same time a dentist. He recognized certain symptoms which made it a necessity to sacrifice me to the god Mercury, and that treatment, owing to the season of the year, compelled me to keep my room for six weeks. It was during the winter of 1749.

While I was thus curing myself of an ugly disease, De la Haye inoculated me with another as bad, perhaps even worse, which I should never have thought myself susceptible of catching. This Fleming, who left me only for one hour in the morning, to go—at least he said so—to church to perform his devotions, made a bigot of me! And to such an extent, that I agreed with him that I was indeed fortunate to have caught a disease which was the origin of the faith now taking possession of my soul. I would thank God fervently and with the most complete conviction for having employed Mercury to lead my mind, until then wrapped in darkness, to the pure light of holy truth! There is no doubt that such an extraordinary change in my reasoning system was the result of the exhaustion brought on by the mercury. That impure and always injurious metal had weakened my mind to such an extent that I had become almost

besotted, and I fancied that until then my judgment had been insane. The result was that, in my newly acquired wisdom, I took the resolution of leading a totally different sort of life in future. De la Haye would often cry for joy when he saw me shedding tears caused by the contrition which he had had the wonderful cleverness to sow in my poor sickly soul. He would talk to me of paradise and the other world, just as if he had visited them in person, and I never laughed at him! He had accustomed me to renounce my reason; now to renounce that divine faculty a man must no longer be conscious of its value, he must have become an idiot. The reader may judge of the state to which I was reduced by the following specimen. One day, De la Haye said to me:

"It is not known whether God created the world during the vernal equinox or during the autumnal one."

"Creation being granted," I replied, in spite of the mercury, "such a question is childish, for the seasons are relative, and differ in the different quarters of the globe."

De la Haye reproached me with the heathenism of my ideas, told me that I must abandon such impious reasonings . . . . . and I gave way!

That man had been a Jesuit. He not only, however, refused to admit it, but he would not even suffer anyone to mention it to him. This is how

he completed his work of seduction by telling me the history of his life.

"After I had been educated in a good school," he said, "and had devoted myself with some success to the arts and sciences, I was for twenty years employed at the University of Paris. Afterwards I served as an engineer in the army, and since that time I have published several works anonymously, which are now in use in every boys' school. Having given up the military service, and being poor, I undertook and completed the education of several young men, some of whom shine now in the world even more by their excellent conduct than by their talents. My last pupil was the Marquis Botta. Now being without employment I live, as you see, trusting in God's providence. Four years ago, I made the acquaintance of Baron Bavois, from Lausanne, son of General Bavois who commanded a regiment in the service of the Duke of Modena, and afterwards was unfortunate enough to make himself too conspicuous. The young baron, a Calvinist like his father, did not like the idle life he was leading at home, and he solicited me to undertake his education in order to fit him for a military career. Delighted at the opportunity of cultivating his fine natural disposition, I gave up everything to devote myself entirely to my task. I soon discovered that, in the question of faith, he knew himself to be in error, and that he remained a Calvinist only out of respect to his

family. When I had found out his secret feelings on that head, I had no difficulty in proving to him that his most important interests were involved in that question, as his eternal salvation was at stake. Struck by the truth of my words, he abandoned himself to my affection, and I took him to Rome, where I presented him to the Pope, Benedict XIV., who, immediately after the abjuration of my pupil got him a lieutenancy in the army of the Duke of Modena. But the dear proselyte, who is only twenty-five years of age, cannot live upon his pay of seven sequins a month, and since his abjuration he has received nothing from his parents, who are highly incensed at what they call his apostacy. He would find himself compelled to go back to Lausanne, if I did not assist him. But, alas! I am poor, and without employment, so I can only send him the trifling sums which I can obtain from the few good Christians with whom I am acquainted.

"My pupil, whose heart is full of gratitude, would be very glad to know his benefactors, but they refuse to acquaint him with their names, and they are right, because charity, in order to be meritorious, must not partake of any feeling of vanity. Thank God, I have no cause for such a feeling! I am but too happy to act as a father towards a young saint, and to have had a share, as the humble instrument of the Almighty, in the salvation of his soul. That handsome and good

young man trusts no one but me, and writes to me regularly twice a week. I am too discreet to communicate his letters to you, but, if you were to read them, they would make you weep for sympathy. It is to him that I have sent the three gold pieces which you gave me yesterday."

As he said the last words my converter rose, and went to the window to dry his tears. I felt deeply moved, and full of admiration for the virtue of De la Haye and of his pupil, who, to save his soul, had placed himself under the hard necessity of accepting alms. I cried as well as the apostle, and in my dawning piety I told him that I insisted not only upon remaining unknown to his pupil, but also upon ignoring the amount of the sums he might take out of my purse to forward to him, and I therefore begged that he would help himself without rendering me any account. De la Haye embraced me warmly, saying that, by following the precepts of the Gospel so well, I should certainly win the kingdom of heaven.

The mind is sure to follow the body; it is a privilege enjoyed by matter. With an empty stomach, I became a fanatic; and the hollow made in my brain by the mercury became the home of enthusiasm. Without mentioning it to De la Haye, I wrote to my three friends, Messers. Bragadin and company, several letters full of pathos concerning my Tartufe and his pupil, and I managed to communicate my fanaticism to them. You are aware,

dear reader, that nothing is so catching as the plague; now, fanaticism, no matter of what nature, is only the plague of the human mind.

I made my friends to understand that the good of our society depended upon the admission of these two virtuous individuals. I allowed them to guess it, but, having myself become a Jesuit, I took care not to say it openly. It would of course be better if such an idea appeared to have emanated from those men, so simple, and at the same time so truly virtuous. "It is God's will," I wrote to them (for deceit must always take refuge under the protection of that sacred name), "that you employ all your influence in Venice to find an honourable position for M. de la Haye, and to promote the interests of young M. Bavois in his profession."

M. de Bragadin answered that De la Haye could take up his quarters with us in his palace, and that Bavois was to write to his protector, the Pope, entreating His Holiness to recommend him to the ambassador of Venice, who would then forward that recommendation to the Senate, and that Bavois could, in that way, feel sure of good employment.

The affair of the Patriarchate of Aquileia was at that time under discussion; the Republic of Venice was in possession of it as well as the Emperor of Austria, who claimed the *jus eligendi:* the Pope Benedict XIV. had been chosen as

arbitrator, and as he had not yet given his decision it was evident that the Republic would shew very great deference to his recommendation.

While that important affair was enlisting all our sympathies, and while they were expecting in Venice a letter stating the effect of the Pope's recommendation, I was the hero of a comic adventure which, for the sake of my readers, must not pass unnoticed.

At the beginning of April I was entirely cured of my last misfortune. I had recovered all my usual vigour, and I accompanied my converter to church every day, never missing a sermon. We likewise spent the evening together at the *café,* where we generally met a great many officers. There was among them a Provencal who amused everybody with his boasting and with the recital of the military exploits by which he pretended to have distinguished himself in the service of several countries, and principally in Spain. As he was truly a source of amusement, everybody pretended to believe him in order to keep up the game. One day as I was staring at him, he asked me whether I knew him.

"By George, sir!" I exclaimed, "know you! Why, did we not fight side by side at the battle of Arbela?"

At those words everybody burst out laughing, but the boaster, nothing daunted, said, with animation,——

"Well, gentlemen, I do not see anything so very laughable in that. I was at that battle, and therefore this gentleman might very well have remarked me; in fact, I think I can recollect him."

And, continuing to speak to me, he named the regiment in which we were brother officers. Of course we embraced one another, congratulating each other upon the pleasure we both felt in meeting again in Parma. After that truly comic joke I left the coffee-room in the company of my inseparable preacher.

The next morning, as I was at breakfast with De la Haye, the boasting Provencal entered my room without taking off his hat, and said,——

"M. d'Arbela, I have something of importance to tell you; make haste and follow me. If you are afraid, you may take anyone you please with you. I am good for half a dozen men."

I left my chair, seized my pistols, and aimed at him.

"No one," I said, with decision, "has the right to come and disturb me in my room; be off this minute, or I blow your brains out."

The fellow, drawing his sword, dared me to murder him, but at the same moment De la Haye threw himself between us, stamping violently on the floor. The landlord came up, and threatened the officer to send for the police if he did not withdraw immediately.

He went away, saying that I had insulted him in public, and that he would take care that the reparation I owed him should be as public as the insult.

When he had gone, seeing that the affair might take a tragic turn, I began to examine with De la Haye how it could be avoided, but we had not long to puzzle our imagination, for in less than half an hour an officer of the Infante of Parma presented himself, and requested me to repair immediately to head-quarters, where M. de Bertolan, Commander of Parma, wanted to speak to me.

I asked De la Haye to accompany me as a witness of what I had said in the coffee-room as well as of what had taken place in my apartment.

I presented myself before the commander, whom I found surrounded by several officers, and, among them, the bragging Provencal.

M. de Bertolan, who was a witty man, smiled when he saw me; then, with a very serious countenance, he said to me,——

"Sir, as you have made a laughing-stock of this officer in a public place, it is but right that you should give him publicly the satisfaction which he claims, and as commander of this city I find myself bound in duty to ask you for that satisfaction in order to settle the affair amicably."

"Commander," I answered, "I do not see why a satisfaction should be offered to this gentleman, for it is not true that I have insulted him by

turning him into ridicule. I told him that I thought I had seen him at the battle of Arbela, and I could not have any doubt about it when he said that he had been present at that battle, and that he knew me again."

"Yes," interrupted the officer, "but I heard Rodela and not Arbela, and everybody knows that I fought at Rodela. But you said Arbela, and certainly with the intention of laughing at me, since that battle has been fought more than two thousand years ago, while the battle of Rodela in Africa took place in our time, and I was there under the orders of the Duke de Mortemar."

"In the first place, sir, you have no right to judge of my intentions, but I do not dispute your having been present at Rodela, since you say so; but in that case the tables are turned, and now I demand a reparation from you if you dare discredit my having been at Arbela. I certainly did not serve under the Duke de Mortemar, because he was not there, at least to my knowledge, but I was aid-de-camp of Parmenion, and I was wounded under his eyes. If you were to ask me to shew you the scar, I could not satisfy you, for you must understand that the body I had at that time does not exist any longer, and in my present bodily envelope I am only twenty-three years old."

"All this seems to me sheer madness, but, at all events, I have witnesses to prove that you have been laughing at me, for you stated that you had

seen me at that battle, and, by the powers! it is not possible, because I was not there. At all events, I demand satisfaction."

"So do I, and we have equal rights, if mine are not even better than yours, for your witnesses are likewise mine, and these gentlemen will assert that you said that you had seen me at Rodela, and, by the powers! it is not possible, for I was not there."

"Well, I may have made a mistake."

"So may I, and therefore we have no longer any claim against one another."

The commander, who was biting his lips to restrain his mirth, said to him,——

"My dear sir, I do not see that you have the slightest right to demand satisfaction, since this gentleman confesses, like you, that he might have been mistaken."

"But," remarked the officer, "is it credible that he was at the battle of Arbela?"

"This gentleman leaves you free to believe or not to believe, and he is at liberty to assert that he was there until you can prove the contrary. Do you wish to deny it to make him draw his sword?"

"God forbid! I would rather consider the affair ended."

"Well, gentlemen," said the commander, "I have but one more duty to perform, and it is to advise you to embrace one another like two honest men."

We followed the advice with great pleasure.

The next day, the Provencal, rather crest-fallen, came to share my dinner, and I gave him a friendly welcome. Thus was ended that comic adventure, to the great satisfaction of M. de la Haye.

CHAPTER IV

I RECEIVE GOOD NEWS FROM VENICE, TO WHICH CITY I RETURN WITH DE LA HAYE AND BAVOIS—MY THREE FRIENDS GIVE ME A WARM WELCOME; THEIR SURPRISE AT FINDING ME A MODEL OF DEVOTION—BAVOIS LURES ME BACK TO MY FORMER WAY OF LIVING—DE LA HAYE A THOROUGH HYPOCRITE—ADVENTURE WITH THE GIRL MARCHETTI—I WIN A PRIZE IN THE LOTTERY—I MEET BALETTI—DE LA HAYE LEAVES M. DE BRAGADIN'S PALACE—MY DEPARTURE FOR PARIS.

Whilst De la Haye was every day gaining greater influence over my weakened mind, whilst I was every day devoutly attending mass, sermons, and every office of the Church, I received from Venice a letter containing the pelasant information that my affair had followed its natural course, namely, that it was entirely forgotten; and in another letter M. de Bragadin informed me that the minister had written to the Venetian ambassador in Rome with instructions to assure the Holy Father that Baron Bavois would, immediately after his arrival

in Venice, receive in the army of the Republic an appointment which would enable him to live honourably and to gain a high position by his talents.

That letter overcame M. de la Haye with joy, and I completed his happiness by telling him that nothing hindered me from going back to my native city.

He immediately made up his mind to go to Modena in order to explain to his pupil how he was to act in Venice to open for himself the way to a brilliant fortune. De la Haye depended on me in every way; he saw my fanaticism, and he was well aware that it is a disease which rages as long as the causes from which it has sprung are in existence. As he was going with me to Venice, he flattered himself that he could easily feed the fire he had lighted. Therefore he wrote to Bavois that he would join him immediately, and two days after he took leave of me, weeping abundantly, praising highly the virtues of my soul, calling me his son, his dear son, and assuring me that his great affection for me had been caused by the mark of election which he had seen on my countenance. After that, I felt my calling and election were sure.

A few days after the departure of De la Haye, I left Parma in my carriage with which I parted in Fusina, and from there I proceeded to Venice. After an absence of a year, my three friends

received me as if I had been their guardian angel. They expressed their impatience to welcome the two saints announced by my letters. An apartment was ready for De la Haye in the palace of M. de Bragadin, and as state reasons did not allow my father to receive in his own house a foreigner who had not yet entered the service of the Republic, two rooms had been engaged for Bavois in the neighbourhood.

They were thoroughly amazed at the wonderful change which had taken place in my morals. Every day attending mass, often present at the preaching and at the other services, never shewing myself at the casino, frequenting only a certain *café* which was the place of meeting for all men of acknowledged piety and reserve, and always studying when I was not in their company. When they compared my actual mode of living with the former one, they marvelled, and they could not sufficiently thank the eternal providence of God whose inconceivable ways they admired. They blessed the criminal actions which had compelled me to remain one year away from my native place. I crowned their delight by paying all my debts without asking any money from M. de Bragadin, who, not having given me anything for one year, had religiously put together every month the sum he had allowed me. I need not say how pleased the worthy friends were, when they saw that I had entirely given up gambling.

I had a letter from De la Haye in the beginning of May. He announced that he was on the eve of starting with the son so dear to his heart, and that he would soon place himself at the disposition of the respectable men to whom I had announced him.

Knowing the hour at which the barge arrived from Modena, we all went to meet them, except M. de Bragadin, who was engaged at the senate. We returned to the palace before him, and when he came back, finding us all together, he gave his new guests the most friendly welcome. De la Haye spoke to me of a hundred things, but I scarcely heard what he said, so much was my attention taken up by Bavois. He was so different to what I had fancied him to be from the impression I had received from De la Haye, that my ideas were altogether upset. I had to study him for three days before I could make up my mind to like him. I must give his portrait to my readers.

Baron Bavois was a young man of about twenty-five, of middle size, handsome in features, well made, fair, of an equable temper, speaking well and with intelligence, and uttering his words with a tone of modesty which suited him exactly. His features were regular and pleasing, his teeth were beautiful, his hair was long and fine, always well taken care of, and exhaling the perfume of the pomatum with which it was dressed. That individual, who was the exact opposite of the man

that De la Haye had led me to imagine, surprised my friends greatly, but their welcome did not in any way betray their astonishment, for their pure and candid minds would not admit a judgment contrary to the good opinion they had formed of his morals.

As soon as we had established De la Haye in his beautiful apartment, I accompanied Bavois to the rooms engaged for him, where his luggage had been sent by my orders. He found himself in very comfortable quarters, and being received with distinction by his worthy host, who was already greatly prejudiced in his favour, the young baron embraced me warmly, pouring out all his gratitude, and assuring me that he felt deeply all I had done for him without knowing him, as De la Haye had informed him of all that had occurred. I pretended not to understand what he was alluding to, and to change the subject of conversation I asked him how he intended to occupy his time in Venice until his military appointment gave him serious duties to perform.

"I trust," he answered, "that we shall enjoy ourselves in an agreeable way, for I have no doubt that our inclinations are the same."

Mercury and De la Haye had so completely besotted me that I should have found some difficulty in understanding these words. however intelligible they were; but if I did not go any further than the outward signification of his answer,

I could not help remarking that he had already taken the fancy of the two daughters of the house. They were neither pretty nor ugly, but he shewed himself gracious towards them like a man who understands his business. I had, however, already made such great progress in my mystical education, that I considered the compliments he addressed to the girls as mere forms of politeness.

For the first day, I took my young baron only to the St. Mark's Square and to the *café,* where we remained until supper-time, as it had been arranged that he would take his meals with us. At the supper-table he shewed himself very witty, and M. Dandolo named an hour for the next day, when he intended to present him to the secretary for war. In the evening I accompanied him to his lodging, where I found that the two young girls were delighted because the young Swiss nobleman had no servant, and because they hoped to convince him that he would not require one.

The next day, a little earlier than the time appointed, I called upon him with M. Dandolo and M. Barbaro, who were both to present him at the war office. We found him at his toilet under the delicate hands of the eldest girl, who was dressing his hair. His room was fragrant with the perfumes of his pomatums and scents. This did not indicate a sainted man; yet my two friends did not feel scandalized, although their astonishment was very evident, for they had not expected that show of

gallantry from a young neophyte. I was nearly bursting into a loud laugh, when I heard M. Dandolo remark that, unless we hurried, we would not have time to hear mass, whereupon Bavois enquired whether it was a festival. M. Dandolo, without passing any remark, answered negatively, and after that, mass was not again mentioned. When Bavois was ready, I left them and went a different way. I met them again at dinner-time, during which the reception given to the young baron by the secretary was discussed, and in the evening my friends introduced him to several ladies who were much pleased with him. In less than a week he was so well known that there was no fear of his time hanging wearily on his hands, but that week was likewise enough to give me a perfect insight into his nature and way of thinking. I should not have required such a long study, if I had not at first begun on a wrong scent, or rather if my intelligence had not been stultified by my fanaticism. Bavois was particularly fond of women, of gambling, of every luxury, and, as he was poor, women supplied him with the best part of his resources. As to religious faith he had none, and as he was no hypocrite he confessed as much to me.

"How have you contrived," I said to him one day, "such as you are, to deceive De la Haye?"

"God forbid I should deceive anyone. De la Haye is perfectly well aware of my system, and of my way of thinking on religious matters, but,

being himself very devout, he entertains a holy sympathy for my soul, and I do not object to it. He has bestowed many kindnesses upon me, and I feel grateful to him; my affection for him is all the greater because he never teazes me with his dogmatic lessons or with sermons respecting my salvation, of which I have no doubt that God, in His fatherly goodness, will take care. All this is settled between De la Haye and me, and we live on the best of terms."

The best part of the joke is that, while I was studying him, Bavois, without knowing it, restored my mind to its original state, and I was ashamed of myself when I realized that I had been the dupe of a Jesuit who was an arrant hypocrite, in spite of the character of holiness which he assumed, and which he could play with such marvellous ability. From that moment I fell again into all my former practices. But let us return to De la Haye.

That late Jesuit, who in his inmost heart loved nothing but his own comfort, already advanced in years, and therefore no longer caring for the fair sex, was exactly the sort of man to please my simple-minded trio of friends. As he never spoke to them but of God, of His angels, and of everlasting glory, and as he was always accompanying them to church, they found him a delightful companion. They longed for the time when he would discover himself, for they imagined he was at the very least a Rosicrucian, or perhaps the hermit of Courpegna, who

had taught me the cabalistic science and made me a present of the immortal Paralis. They felt grieved because the oracle had forbidden them, through my cabalistic lips, ever to mention my science in the presence of Tartufe.

As I had foreseen, that interdiction left me to enjoy as I pleased all the time that I would have been called upon to devote to their devout credulity, and besides, I was naturally afraid lest De la Haye, such as I truly believed him to be, would never lend himself to that trifling nonsense, and would, for the sake of deserving greater favour at their hands, endeavour to undeceive them and to take my place in their confidence.

I soon found out that I had acted with prudence, for in less than three weeks the cunning fox had obtained so great an influence over the mind of my three friends that he was foolish enough, not only to believe that he did not want me any more to support his credit with them, but likewise that he could supplant me whenever he chose. I could see it clearly in his way of addressing me, as well as in the change in his proceedings.

He was beginning to hold with my friends frequent conversations to which I was not summoned, and he had contrived to make them introduce him to several families which I was not in the habit of visiting. He assumed his grand Jesuitic airs, and, although with honeyed word he would take the liberty of censuring me because I sometimes

spent a night out, and, as he would say, "God knows where!"

I was particularly vexed at his seeming to accuse me of leading his pupil astray. He then would assume the tone of a man speaking jestingly, but I was not deceived. I thought it was time to put an end to his game, and with that intention I paid him a visit in his bedroom. When I was seated, I said,——

"I come, as a true worshipper of the Gospel, to tell you in private something that, another time, I would say in public."

"What is it, my dear friend?"

"I advise you for the future not to hurl at me the slightest taunt respecting the life I am leading with Bavois, when we are in the presence of my three worthy friends. I do not object to listen to you when we are alone."

"You are wrong in taking my innocent jests seriously."

"Wrong or right, that does not matter. Why do you never attack your proselyte? Be careful for the future, or I might on my side, and only in jest like you, throw at your head some repartee which you have every reason to fear, and thus repay you with interest."

And bowing to him I left his room.

A few days afterwards I spent a few hours with my friends and Paralis, and the oracle enjoined them never to accomplish without my advice

anything that might be recommended or even insinuated by Valentine; that was the cabalistic name of the disciple of Escobar. I knew I could rely upon their obedience to that order.

De la Haye soon took notice of some slight change; he became more reserved, and Bavois, whom I informed of what I had done, gave me his full approbation. He felt convinced, as I was, that De la Haye had been useful to him only through weak or selfish reasons, that is, that he would have cared little for his soul if his face had not been handsome, and if he had not known that he would derive important advantages from having caused his so-called conversion.

Finding that the Venetian government was postponing his appointment from day to day, Bavois entered the service of the French ambassador. That decision made it necessary for him not only to cease his visits to M. de Bragadin, but even to give up his intercourse with De la Haye, who was the guest of that senator.

It is one of the strictest laws of the Republic that the patricians and their families shall not hold any intercourse with the foreign ambassadors and their suites. But the decision taken by Bavois did not prevent my friends speaking in his favour, and they succeeded in obtaining employment for him, as will be seen further on.

The husband of Christine, whom I never visited, invited me to go to the casino which he

was in the habit of frequenting with his aunt and his wife, who had already presented him with a token of their mutual affection. I accepted his invitation, and I found Christine as lovely as ever, and speaking the Venetian dialect like her husband. I made in that casino the acquaintance of a chemist, who inspired me with the wish to follow a course of chemistry. I went to his house, where I found a young girl who greatly pleased me. She was a neighbour, and came every evening to keep the chemist's elderly wife company, and at a regular hour a servant called to take her home. I had never made love to her but once in a trifling sort of way, and in the presence of the old lady, but I was surprised not to see her after that for several days, and I expressed my astonishment. The good lady told me that very likely the girl's cousin, an abbé, with whom she was residing, had heard of my seeing her every evening, had become jealous, and would not allow her to come again.

"An abbé jealous?"

"Why not? He never allows her to go out except on Sundays to attend the first mass at the Church of Santa Maria Mater Domini, close by his dwelling. He did not object to her coming here, because he knew that we never had any visitors, and very likely he has heard through the servant of your being here every evening."

A great enemy to all jealous persons, and a greater friend to my amorous fancies, I wrote to

the young girl that, if she would leave her cousin for me, I would give her a house in which she should be the mistress, and that I would surround her with good society and with every luxury to be found in Venice. I added that I would be in the church on the following Sunday to receive her answer.

I did not forget my appointment, and her answer was that the abbé being her tyrant, she would consider herself happy to escape out of his clutches, but that she could not make up her mind to follow me unless I consented to marry her. She concluded her letter by saying that, in case I entertained honest intentions towards her, I had only to speak to her mother, Jeanne Marchetti, who resided in Lusia, a city thirty miles distant from Venice.

This letter piqued my curiosity, and I even imagined that she had written it in concert with the abbé. Thinking that they wanted to dupe me, and besides, finding the proposal of marriage ridiculous, I determined on having my revenge. But I wanted to get to the bottom of it, and I made up my mind to see the girl's mother. She felt honoured by my visit, and greatly pleased when, after I had shewn her her daughter's letter, I told her that I wished to marry her, but that I should never think of it as long as she resided with the abbé.

"That abbé," she said, "is a distant relative.

He used to live alone in his house in Venice, and two years ago he told me that he was in want of a housekeeper. He asked me to let my daughter go to him in that capacity, assuring me that in Venice she would have good opportunities of getting married. He offered to give me a deed in writing stating that, on the day of her marriage, he would give her all his furniture valued at about one thousand ducats, and the inheritance of a small estate, bringing one hundred ducats a year, which he possesses here. It seemed to me a good bargain, and, my daughter being pleased with the offer, I accepted. He gave me the deed duly drawn by a notary, and my daughter went with him. I know that he makes a regular slave of her, but she chose to go. Nevertheless, I need not tell you that my most ardent wish is to see her married, for, as long as a girl is without a husband, she is too much exposed to temptation, and the poor mother cannot rest in peace."

"Then come to Venice with me. You will take your daughter out of the abbé's house, and I will make her my wife. Unless that is done I cannot marry her, for I should dishonour myself if I received my wife from his hands."

"Oh, no! for he is my cousin, although only in the fourth degree, and, what is more, he is a priest and says the mass every day."

"You make me laugh, my good woman. Everybody knows that a priest says the mass

without depriving himself of certain trifling enjoyments. Take your daughter with you, or give up all hope of ever seeing her married."

"But if I take her with me, he will not give her his furniture, and perhaps he will sell his small estate here."

"I undertake to look to that part of the business. I promise to take her out of his hands, and to make her come back to you with all the furniture, and to obtain the estate when she is my wife. If you knew me better, you would not doubt what I say. Come to Venice, and I assure you that you shall return here in four or five days with your daughter."

She read the letter which had been written to me by her daughter again, and told me that, being a poor widow, she had not the money necessary to pay the expenses of her journey to Venice, or of her return to Lusia.

"In Venice you shall not want for anything," I said; "in the mean time, here are ten sequins."

"Ten sequins! Then I can go with my sister-in-law?"

"Come with anyone you like, but let us go soon so as to reach Chiozza, where we must sleep. To-morrow we shall dine in Venice, and I undertake to defray all expenses."

We arrived in Venice the next day at ten o'clock, and I took the two women to Castello, to a house the first floor of which was empty. I left

them there, and provided with the deed signed by the abbé I went to dine with my three friends, to whom I said that I had been to Chiozza on important business. After dinner, I called upon the lawyer, Marco de' Lesse, who told me that if the mother presented a petition to the President of the Council of Ten, she would immediately be invested with power to take her daughter away with all the furniture in the house, which she could send wherever she pleased. I instructed him to have the petition ready, saying that I would come the next morning with the mother, who would sign it in his presence.

I brought the mother early in the morning, and after she had signed the petition we went to the Boussole, where she presented it to the President of the Council. In less than a quarter of an hour a bailiff was ordered to repair to the house of the priest with the mother, and to put her in possession of her daughter, and of all the furniture, which she would immediately take away.

The order was carried into execution to the very letter. I was with the mother in a gondola as near as possible to the house, and I had provided a large boat in which the *sbirri* stowed all the furniture found on the premises. When it was all done, the daughter was brought to the gondola, and she was extremely surprised to see me. Her mother kissed her, and told her that I would be her husband the very next day. She

answered that she was delighted, and that nothing had been left in her tyrant's house except his bed and his clothes.

When we reached Castello, I ordered the furniture to be brought out of the boat; we had dinner, and I told the three women that they must go back to Lusia, where I would join them as soon as I had seetled all my affairs. I spent the afternoon gaily with my intended. She told us that the abbé was dressing when the bailiff presented the order of the Council of Ten, with injunctions to allow its free execution under penalty of death; that the abbé finished his toilet, went out to say his mass, and that everything had been done without the slightest opposition. "I was told," she added, "that my mother was waiting for me in the gondola, but I did not expect to find you, and I never suspected that you were at the bottom of the whole affair."

"It is the first proof I give you of my love."

These words made her smile very pleasantly.

I took care to have a good supper and some excellent wines, and after we had spent two hours at table in the midst of the joys of Bacchus, I devoted four more to a pleasant *tête-à-tête* with my intended bride.

The next morning, after breakfast, I had the whole of the furniture stowed in a peotta, which I had engaged for that purpose and paid for beforehand. I gave ten more sequins to the mother, and sent them away all three in great delight. The

affair was completed to my honour as well as to my entire satisfaction, and I returned home.

The case had made so much noise that my friends could not have remained ignorant of it; the consequence was that, when they saw me, they shewed their surprise and sorrow. De la Haye embraced me with an air of profound grief, but it was a feigned feeling—a harlequin's dress, which he had the talent of assuming with the greatest facility. M. de Bragadin alone laughed heartily, saying to the others that they did not understand the affair, and that it was the forerunner of something great which was known only to heavenly spirits. On my side, being ignorant of the opinion they entertained of the matter, and certain that they were not informed of all the circumstances, I laughed like M. de Bragadin, but said nothing. I had nothing to fear, and I wanted to amuse myself with all that would be said. We sat down to table, and M. Barbaro was the first to tell me in a friendly manner that he hoped at least that this was not the day after my wedding.

"Then people say that I am married?"

"It is said everywhere and by everybody. The members of the Council themselves believe it, and they have good reason to believe that they are right."

"To be right in believing such a thing, they ought to be certain of it, and those gentlemen have no such certainty. As they are not infallible any

more than any one, except God, I tell you that they are mistaken. I like to perform good actions and to get pleasure for my money, but not at the expense of my liberty. Whenever you want to know my affairs, recollect that you can receive information about them only from me, and public rumour is only good to amuse fools."

"But," said M. Dandolo, "you spent the night with the person who is represented as your wife?"

"Quite true, but I have no account to give to anyone respecting what I have done last night. Are you not of my opinion, M. de la Haye?"

"I wish you would not ask my opinion, for I do not know. But I must say that public rumour ought not to be despised. The deep affection I have for you causes me to grieve for what the public voice says about you."

"How is it that those reports do not grieve M. de Bragadin, who has certainly greater affection for me than you have?"

"I respect you, but I have learned at my own expense that slander is to be feared. It is said that, in order to get hold of a young girl who was residing with her uncle—a worthy priest, you suborned a woman who declared herself to be the girl's mother, and thus deceived the Supreme Council, through the authority of which she obtained possession of the girl for you. The bailiff sent by the Council swears that you were in the gondola with the false mother when the young girl joined her. It is said that

the deed, in virtue of which you caused the worthy ecclesiastic's furniture to be carried off, is false, and you are blamed for having made the highest body of the State a stepping-stone to crime. In fine, it is said that, even if you have married the girl, and no doubt of it is entertained, the members of the Council will not be silent as to the fraudulent means you have had recourse to in order to carry out your intentions successfully."

"That is a very long speech," I said to him, coldly, "but learn from me that a wise man who has heard a criminal accusation related with so many absurd particulars ceases to be wise when he makes himself the echo of what he has heard, for if the accusation should turn out to be a calumny, he would himself become the accomplice of the slanderer."

After that sentence, which brought the blood to the face of the Jesuit, but which my friends thought very wise, I entreated him, in a meaning voice, to spare his anxiety about me, and to be quite certain that I knew the laws of honour, and that I had judgment enough to take care of myself, and to let foul tongues say what they liked about me, just as I did when I heard them speak ill of him.

The adventure was the talk of the city for five or six days, after which it was soon forgotten.

But three months having elapsed without my having paid any visit to Lusia, or having answered

the letters written to me by the *damigella* Marchetti, and without sending her the money she claimed of me, she made up her mind to take certain proceedings which might have had serious consequences, although they had none whatever in the end.

One day, Ignacio, the bailiff of the dreaded tribunal of the State inquisitors, presented himself as I was sitting at table with my friends, De la Haye, and two other guests. He informed me that the Cavaliere Cantarini dal Zoffo wished to see me, and would wait for me the next morning at such an hour at the Madonna de l'Orto. I rose from the table and answered, with a bow, that I would not fail to obey the wishes of his excellency. The bailiff then left us.

I could not possibly guess what such a high dignitary of State could want with my humble person, yet the message made us rather anxious, for Cantarini dal Zoffo was one of the Inquisitors, that is to say, a bird of very ill omen. M. de Bragadin, who had been Inquisitor while he was Councillor, and therefore knew the habits of the tribunal, told me that I had nothing to fear.

"Ignacio was dressed in private clothes," he added, "and therefore he did not come as the official messenger of the dread tribunal. M. Cantarini wishes to speak to you only as a private citizen, as he sends you word to call at his palace and not at the court-house. He is an elderly

man, strict but just, to whom you must speak frankly and without equivocating, otherwise you would make matters worse."

I was pleased with M. de Bragadin's advice, which was of great use to me. I called at the appointed time.

I was immediately announced, and I had not long to wait. I entered the room, and his excellency, seated at a table, examined me from head to foot for one minute without speaking to me; he then rang the bell, and ordered his servant to introduce the two ladies who were waiting in the next room. I guessed at once what was the matter, and felt no surprise when I saw the woman Marchetti and her daughter. His excellency asked me if I knew them.

"I must know them, monsignor, as one of them will become my wife when she has convinced me by her good conduct that she is worthy of that honour."

"Her conduct is good, she lives with her mother at Lusia; you have deceived her. Why do you postpone your marriage with her? Why do you not visit her? You never answer her letters, and you let her be in want."

"I cannot marry her, your excellency, before I have enough to support her. That will come in three or four years, thanks to a situation which M. de Bragadin, my only protector, promises to obtain for me. Until then she must live honestly,

and support herself by working. I will only marry her when I am convinced of her honesty, and particularly when I am certain that she has given up all intercourse with the abbé, her cousin in the fourth degree. I do not visit her because my confessor and my conscience forbid me to go to her house."

"She wishes you to give her a legal promise of marriage, and sustentation."

"Monsignor, I am under no obligation to give her a promise of marriage, and having no means whatever I cannot support her. She must earn her own living with her mother."

"When she lived with her cousin," said her mother, "she never wanted anything, and she shall go back to him."

"If she returns to his house I shall not take the trouble of taking her out of his hands a second time, and your excellency will then see that I was right to defer my marriage with her until I was convinced of her honesty."

The judge told me that my presence was no longer necessary. It was the end of the affair, and I never heard any more about it. The recital of the dialogue greatly amused my friends.

At the beginning of the Carnival of 1750 I won a prize of three thousand ducats at the lottery. Fortune made me that present when I did not require it, for I had held the bank during the autumn, and had won. It was at a casino where

no nobleman dared to present himself, because one of the partners was an officer in the service of the Duke de Montalègre, the Spanish Ambassador. The citizens of Venice felt ill at ease with the patricians, and that is always the case under an aristocratic government, because equality exists in reality only between the members of such a government.

As I intended to take a trip to Paris, I placed one thousand sequins in M. de Bragadin's hands, and with that project in view I had the courage to pass the carnival without risking my money at the faro-table. I had taken a share of one-fourth in the bank of an honest patrician, and early in Lent he handed me a large sum.

Towards mid-Lent my friend Baletti returned from Mantua to Venice. He was engaged at the St. Moses Theatre as ballet-master during the Fair of the Assumption. He was with Marina, but they did not live together. She made the conquest of an English Jew, called Mendez, who spent a great deal of money for her. That Jew gave me good news of Thérèse, whom he had known in Naples, and in whose hands he had left some of his spoils. The information pleased me, and I was very glad to have been prevented by Henriette from joining Thérèse in Naples, as I had intended, for I should certainly have fallen in love with her again, and God knows what the consequence might have been.

It was at that time that Bavois was appointed captain in the service of the Republic; he rose rapidly in his profession, as I shall mention hereafter.

De la Haye undertook the education of a young nobleman called Felix Calvi, and a short time afterwards he accompanied him to Poland. I met him again in Vienna three years later.

I was making my preparations to go to the Fair of Reggio, then to Turin, where the whole of Italy was congregating for the marriage of the Duke of Savoy with a princess of Spain, daughter of Philip V., and lastly to Paris, where, Madame la Dauphine being pregnant, magnificent preparations were made in the expectation of the birth of a prince. Baletti was likewise on the point of undertaking the same journey. He was recalled by his parents, who were dramatic artists: his mother was the celebrated Silvia.

Baletti was engaged at the Italian Theatre in Paris as dancer and first gentleman. I could not choose a companion more to my taste, more agreeable, or in a better position to procure me numerous advantageous acquaintances in Paris.

I bade farewell to my three excellent friends, promising to return within two years.

I left my brother Francois in the studio of Simonetti, the painter of battle pieces, known as *the Parmesan*. I gave him a promise to think of him in Paris, where, at that time particularly, great

talent was always certain of a high fortune. My readers will see how I kept my word.

I likewise left in Venice my brother Jean, who had returned to that city after having travelled through Italy with Guarienti. He was on the point of going to Rome, where he remained fourteen years in the studio of Raphael Mengs. He left Rome for Dresden in 1764, where he died in the year 1795.

Baletti started before me, and I left Venice, to meet him in Reggio, on the 1st of June, 1750. I was well fitted out, well supplied with money, and sure not to want for any, if I led a proper life. We shall soon see, dear reader, what judgment you will pass on my conduct, or rather I shall not see it, for I know that when you are able to judge, I shall no longer care for your sentence.

CHAPTER V

I STOP AT FERRARA, WHERE I HAVE A COMIC ADVENTURE—MY ARRIVAL IN PARIS

PRECISELY at twelve o'clock the peotta landed me at Ponte di Lago Oscuro, and I immediately took a post-chaise to reach Ferrara in time for dinner. I put up at St. Mark's Hotel. I was following the waiter up the stairs, when a joyful uproar, which suddenly burst from a room the door of which was open, made me curious to ascertain the cause of so much mirth. I peeped into the room, and saw some twelve persons, men and women, seated round a well-supplied table. It was a very natural thing, and I was moving on, when I was stopped by the exclamation, *"Ah, here he is!"* uttered by the pretty voice of a woman, and at the same moment, the speaker, leaving the table, came to me with open arms and embraced me, saying.——

"Quick, quick, a seat for him near me; take his luggage to his room."

A young man came up, and she said to him, "Well, I told you he would arrive to-day?"

She made me sit near her at the table, after I had been saluted by all the guests who had risen to do me honour.

"My dear cousin," she said, addressing me, "you must be hungry;" and as she spoke she squeezed my foot under the table. "Here is my intended husband whom I beg to introduce to you, as well as my father and mother-in-law. The other guests round the table are friends of the family. But, my dear cousin, tell me why my mother has not come with you?"

At last I had to open my lips!

"Your mother, my dear cousin, will be here in three or four days, at the latest."

I thought that my newly-found cousin was unknown to me, but when I looked at her with more attention, I fancied I recollected her features. She was the Catinella, a dancer of reputation, but I had never spoken to her before. I easily guessed that she was giving me an impromptu part in a play of her own composition, and I was to be a *deus ex machina*. Whatever is singular and unexpected has always attracted me, and as my cousin was pretty, I lent myself most willingly to the joke, entertaining no doubt that she would reward me in an agreeable manner. All I had to do was to play my part well, but without implicating myself. Therefore, pretending to be very hungry, I gave her the opportunity of speaking and of informing me by hints of what

I had to know, in order not to make blunders. Understanding the reason of my reserve, she afforded me the proof of her quick intelligence by saying sometimes to one person, sometimes to the other, everything it was necessary for me to know. Thus I learnt that the wedding could not take place until the arrival of her mother, who was to bring the wardrobe and the diamonds of my cousin. I was the precentor going to Turin to compose the music of the opera which was to be represented at the marriage of the Duke of Savoy. This last discovery pleased me greatly, because I saw that I should have no difficulty in taking my departure the next morning, and I began to enjoy the part I had to play. Yet, if I had not reckoned upon the reward, I might very well have informed the honourable company that my false cousin was mad, but, although Catinella was very near thirty, she was very pretty and celebrated for her intrigues; that was enough, and she could turn me round her little finger.

The future mother-in-law was seated opposite, and to do me honour she filled a glass and offered it to me. Already identified with my part in the comedy, I put forth my hand to take the glass, but seeing that my hand was somewhat bent, she said to me,——

"What is the matter with your hand, sir?"

"Nothing serious, madam; only a slight sprain which a little rest will soon cure."

At these words, Catinella, laughing heartily, said that she regretted the accident because it would deprive her friends of the pleasure they would have enjoyed in hearing me play the harpsichord.

"I am glad to find it a laughing matter, cousin."

"I laugh, because it reminds me of a sprained ankle which I once feigned to have in order not to dance."

After coffee, the mother-in-law, who evidently understood what was proper, said that most likely my cousin wanted to talk with me on family matters, and that we ought to be left alone.

Every one of the guests left the room.

As soon as I was alone with her in my room, which was next to her own she threw herself on a sofa, and gave way to a most immoderate fit of laughter.

"Although I only know you by name," she said to me, "I have entire confidence in you, but you will do well to go away to-morrow. I have been here for two months without any money. I have nothing but a few dresses and some linen, which I should have been compelled to sell to defray my expenses if I had not been lucky enough to inspire the son of the landlord with the deepest love. I have flattered his passion by promising to become his wife, and to bring him as a marriage portion twenty thousand crowns'

worth of diamonds which I am supposed to have in Venice, and which my mother is expected to bring with her. But my mother has nothing and knows nothing of the affair, therefore she is not likely to leave Venice."

"But, tell me, lovely madcap, what will be the end of this extravaganza? I am afraid it will take a tragic turn at the last."

"You are mistaken; it will remain a comedy, and a very amusing one, too. I am expecting every hour the arrival of Count Holstein, brother of the Elector of Mainz. He has written to me from Frankfort; he has left that city, and must by this time have reached Venice. He will take me to the Fair of Reggio, and if my intended takes it into his head to be angry, the count will thrash him and pay my bill, but I am determined that he shall be neither thrashed nor paid. As I go away, I have only to whisper in his ear that I will certainly return, and it will be all right. I know my promise to become his wife as soon as I come back will make him happy."

"That's all very well! You are as witty as a cousin of Satan, but I shall not wait your return to marry you; our wedding must take place at once."

"What folly! Well, wait until this evening."

"Not a bit of it, for I can almost fancy I hear the count's carriage. If he should not arrive, we can continue the sport during the night."

"Do you love me?"

"To distraction! but what does it matter? However, your excellent comedy renders you worthy of adoration. Now, suppose we do not waste our time"

"You are right: it is an episode, and all the more agreeable for being impromptu."

I can well recollect that I found it a delightful episode. Towards evening all the family joined us again, a walk was proposed, and we were on the point of going out, when a carriage drawn by six post-horses noisily entered the yard. Catinella looked through the window, and desired to be left alone, saying that it was a prince who had come to see her. Everybody went away, she pushed me into my room and locked me in. I went to the window, and saw a nobleman four times as big as myself getting out of the carriage. He came upstairs, entered the room of the intended bride, and all that was left to me was the consolation of having seized fortune by the forelock, the pleasure of hearing their conversation, and a convenient view, through a crevice in the partition, of what Catinella contrived to do with that heavy lump of flesh. But at last the stupid amusement wearied me, for it lasted five hours, which were employed in amorous caresses, in packing Catinella's rags, in loading them on the carriage, in taking supper, and in drinking numerous bumpers of Rhenish wine. At midnight the count left the

hotel, carrying away with him the beloved mistress of the landlord's son.

No one during those long hours had come to my room, and I had not called. It was afraid of being discovered, and I did not know how far the German prince would have been pleased if he had found out that he had an idiscreet witness of the heavy and powerless demonstrations of his tenderness, which were a credit to neither of the actors, and which supplied me with ample food for thoughts upon the miseries of mankind.

After the departure of the heroine, catching through the crevice a glimpse of the abandoned lover, I called out to him to unlock my door. The poor silly fellow told me piteously that, Catinella having taken the key with her, it would be necessary to break the door open. I begged him to have it done at once, because I was hungry. As soon as I was out of my prison I had my supper, and the unfortunate lover kept me company. He told me that Catinella had found a moment to promise him that she would return within six weeks, that she was shedding tears in giving him that assurance, and that she had kissed him with great tenderness.

"Has the prince paid her expenses?"

"Not at all. We would not have allowed him to do it, even if he had offered. My future wife would have felt offended, for you can have no idea of the delicacy of her feelings."

"What does your father say of her departure?"

"My father always sees the worst side of everything; he says that she will never come back, and my mother shares his opinion rather than mine. But you, signor maestro, what do you think?"

"That if she has promised to return, she will be sure to keep her word."

"Of course; for if she did not mean to come back, she would not have given me her promise."

"Precisely; I call that a good argument."

I had for my supper what was left of the meal prepared by the count's cook, and I drank a bottle of excellent Rhenish wine which Catinella had juggled away to treat her intended husband, and which the worthy fellow thought could not have a better destination than to treat his future cousin. After supper I took post-horses and continued my journey, assuring the unhappy, forlorn lover that I would do all I could to persuade my cousin to come back very soon. I wanted to pay my bill, but he refused to receive any money. I reached Bologna a few minutes after Catinella, and put up at the same hotel, where I found an opportunity of telling her all her lover had said. I arrived in Reggio before her, but I could not speak to her in that city, for she was always in the company of her potent and impotent lord. After the fair, during which nothing of importance occurred to me, I left Reggio with my friend Baletti and we proceeded to Turin, which I wanted to see, for the first time I had gone to that city with Henriette I had stopped only long enough to change horses.

I found everything beautiful in Turin, the city, the court, the theatre, and the women, including the Duchess of Savoy, but I could not help laughing when I was told that the police of the city was very efficient, for the streets were full of beggars. That police, however, was the special care of the king, who was very intelligent, if we are to believe history, but I confess that I laughed when I saw the ridiculous face of that sovereign.

I had never seen a king before in my life, and a foolish idea made me suppose that a king must be pre-eminent—a very rare being—by his beauty and the majesty of his appearance, and in everything superior to the rest of men. For a young Republican endowed with reason, my idea was not, after all, so very foolish, but I very soon got rid of it when I saw that King of Sardinia, ugly, humpbacked, morose and vulgar even in his manners. I then realized that it was possible to be a king without being entirely a man.

I saw L'Astrua and Gafarello, those two magnificent singers on the stage, and I admired the dancing of La Geofroi, who married at that time a worthy dancer named Bodin.

During my stay in Turin, no amorous fancy disturbed the peace of my soul, except an accident which happened to me with the daughter of my washerwoman, and which increased my knowledge in physics in a singular manner. That girl was very pretty, and, without being what might be

called in love with her, I wished to obtain her favours. Piqued at my not being able to obtain an appointment from her, I contrived one day to catch her at the bottom of a back staircase by which she used to come to my room, and, I must confess, with the intention of using a little violence, if necessary.

Having concealed myself for that purpose at the time I expected her, I got hold of her by surprise, and, half by persuasion, half by the rapidity of my attack, she was brought to a right position, and I lost no time in engaging in action. But at the first movement of the connection a loud explosion somewhat cooled my ardour, the more so that the young girl covered her face with her hands as if she wished to hide her shame. However, encouraging her with a loving kiss, I begin again. But, a report, louder even than the first, strikes at the same moment my ear and my nose. I continue; a third, a fourth report, and, to make a long matter short, each movement gives an explosion with as much regularity as a conductor marking the time for a piece of music!

This extraordinary phenomenon, the confusion of the poor girl, our position—everything, in fact, struck me as so comical, that I burst into the most immoderate laughter, which compelled me to give up the undertaking. Ashamed and confused, the young girl ran away, and I did nothing to hinder her. After that she never had the courage to

present herself before me. I remained seated on the stairs for a quarter of an hour after she had left me, amused at the funny character of a scene which even now excites my mirth. I suppose that the young girl was indebted for her virtue to that singular disease, and most likely, if it were common to all the fair sex, there would be fewer gallant women, unless we had different organs; for to pay for one moment of enjoyment at the expense both of the hearing and of the smell is to give too high a price.

Baletti, being in a hurry to reach Paris, where great preparations were being made for the birth of a Duke of Burgundy—for the duchess was near the time of her delivery—easily persuaded me to shorten my stay in Turin. We therefore left that city, and in five days we arrived at Lyons, where I stayed about a week.

Lyons is a very fine city in which at that time there were scarcely three or four noble houses opened to strangers; but, in compensation, there were more than a hundred hospitable ones belonging to merchants, manufacturers, and commission agents, amongst whom was to be found an excellent society remarkable for easy manners, politeness, frankness, and good style, without the absurd pride to be met with amongst the nobility in the provinces, with very few honourable exceptions. It is true that the standard of good manners is below that of Paris, but one soon gets accustomed to it. The

wealth of Lyons arises from good taste and low prices, and Fashion is the goddess to whom that city owes its prosperity. Fashion alters every year, and the stuff, to which the fashion of the day gives a value equal, say to thirty, is the next year reduced to fifteen or twenty, and then it is sent to foreign countries where it is bought up as a novelty.

The manufacturers of Lyons give high salaries to designers of talent; in that lies the secret of their success. Low prices come from Competition —a fruitful source of wealth, and a daughter of Liberty. Therefore, a government wishing to establish on a firm basis the prosperity of trade must give commerce full liberty; only being careful to prevent the frauds which private interests, often wrongly understood, might invent at the expense of public and general interests. In fact, the government must hold the scales, and allow the citizens to load them as they please.

In Lyons I met the most famous courtezan of Venice. It was generally admitted that her equal had never been seen. Her name was Ancilla. Every man who saw her coveted her, and she was so kindly disposed that she could not refuse her favours to anyone; for if all men loved her one after the other, she returned the compliment by loving them all at once, and with her pecuniary advantages were only a very secondary consideration.

Venice has always been blessed with courtezans

more celebrated by their beauty than their wit. Those who were most famous in my younger days were Ancilla and another called Spina, both the daughters of gondoliers, and both killed very young by the excesses of a profession which, in their eyes, was a noble one. At the age of twenty-two, Ancilla turned a dancer and Spina became a singer. Campioni, a celebrated Venetian dancer, imparted to the lovely Ancilla all the graces and the talents of which her physical perfections were susceptible, and married her. Spina had for her master a *castrato* who succeeded in making of her only a very ordinary singer, and in the absence of talent she was compelled, in order to get a living, to make the most of the beauty she had received from nature.

I shall have occasion to speak again of Ancilla before her death. She was then in Lyons with her husband; they had just returned from England, where they had been greatly applauded at the Haymarket Theatre. She had stopped in Lyons only for her pleasure, and, the moment she shewed herself, she had at her feet the most brilliant young men of the town, who were the slaves of her slightest caprice. Every day parties of pleasure, every evening magnificent suppers, and every night a great faro bank. The banker at the gaming table was a certain Don Joseph Marratti, the same man whom I had known in the Spanish army under the name of Don Pepe il Cadetto, and

a few years afterwards assumed the name of Afflisio, and came to such a bad end. That faro bank won in a few days three hundred thousand francs. In a capital that would not have been considered a large sum, but in a commercial and industrial city like Lyons it raised the alarm amongst the merchants, and the Ultramontanes thought of taking their leave.

It was in Lyons that a respectable individual, whose acquaintance I made at the house of M. de Rochebaron, obtained for me the favour of being initiated in the sublime trifles of Freemasonry. I arrived in Paris a simple apprentice; a few months after my arrival I became companion and master; the last is certainly the highest degree in Freemasonry, for all the other degrees which I took afterwards are only pleasing inventions, which, although symbolical, add nothing to the dignity of master.

No one in this world can obtain a knowledge of everything, but every man who feels himself endowed with faculties, and can realize the extent of his moral strength, should endeavour to obtain the greatest possible amount of knowledge. A well-born young man who wishes to travel and know not only the world, but also what is called good society, who does not want to find himself, under certain circumstances, inferior to his equals, and excluded from participating in all their pleasures, must get himself initiated in what is

called Freemasonry, even if it is only to know superficially what Freemasonry is. It is a charitable institution, which, at certain times and in certain places, may have been a pretext for criminal underplots got up for the overthrow of public order, but is there anything under heaven that has not been abused? Have we not seen the Jesuits, under the cloak of our holy religion, thrust into the parricidal hand of blind enthusiasts the dagger with which kings were to be assassinated! All men of importance, I mean those whose social existence is marked by intelligence and merit, by learning or by wealth, can be (and many of them are) Freemasons: is it possible to suppose that such meetings, in which the initiated, making it a law never to speak, *intra muros,* either of politics, or of religions, or of governments, converse only concerning emblems which are either moral or trifling; is it possible to suppose, I repeat, that those meetings, in which the governments may have their own creatures, can offer dangers sufficiently serious to warrant the proscriptions of kings or the excommunications of Popes?

In reality such proceedings miss the end for which they are undertaken, and the Pope, in spite of his infallibility, will not prevent his persecutions from giving Freemasonry an importance which it would perhaps have never obtained if it had been left alone. Mystery is the essence of man's nature,

and whatever presents itself to mankind under a mysterious appearance will always excite curiosity and be sought, even when men are satisfied that the veil covers nothing but a cypher.

Upon the whole, I would advise all well-born young men, who intend to travel, to become Freemasons; but I would likewise advise them to be careful in selecting a lodge, because, although bad company cannot have any influence while inside of the lodge, the candidate must guard against bad acquaintances.

Those who become Freemasons only for the sake of finding out the secret of the order, run a very great risk of growing old under the trowel without ever realizing their purpose. Yet there is a secret, but it is so inviolable that it has never been confided or whispered to anyone. Those who stop at the outward crust of things imagine that the secret consists in words, in signs, or that the main point of it is to be found only in reaching the highest degree. This is a mistaken view: the man who guesses the secret of Freemasonry, and to know it you *must* guess it, reaches that point only through long attendance in the lodges, through deep thinking, comparison, and deduction. He would not trust that secret to his best friend in Freemasonry, because he is aware that if his friend has not found it out, he could not make any use of it after it had been whispered in his ear. No, he keeps his peace, and the secret remains a secret.

Everything done in a lodge must be secret; but those who have unscrupulously revealed what is done in the lodge, have been unable to reveal that which is essential; they had no knowledge of it, and had they known it, they certainly would not have unveiled the mystery of the ceremonies.

The impression felt in our days by the non-initiated is of the same nature as that felt in former times by those who were not initiated in the mysteries enacted at Eleusis in honour of Ceres. But the mysteries of Eleusis interested the whole of Greece, and whoever had attained some eminence in the society of those days had an ardent wish to take a part in those mysterious ceremonies, while Freemasonry, in the midst of many men of the highest merit, reckons a crowd of scoundrels whom no society ought to acknowledge, because they are the refuse of mankind as far as morality is concerned.

In the mysteries of Ceres, an inscrutable silence was long kept, owing to the veneration in which they were held. Besides, what was there in them that could be revealed? The three words which the hierophant said to the initiated? But what would that revelation have come to? Only to dishonour the indiscreet initiate, for they were barbarous words unknown to the vulgar. I have read somewhere that the three sacred words of the mysteries of Eleusis meant: *Watch, and do no evil.*

The sacred words and the secrets of the various masonic degrees are about as criminal.

The initiation in the mysteries of Eleusis lasted nine days. The ceremonies were very imposing, and the company of the highest. Plutarch informs us that Alcibiades was sentenced to death and his property confiscated, because he had dared to turn the mysteries into ridicule in his house. He was even sentenced to be cursed by the priests and priestesses, but the curse was not pronounced because one of the priestesses opposed it, saying:

"I am a priestess to bless and not to curse!"

Sublime words! Lessons of wisdom and of morality which the Pope despises, but which the Gospel teaches and which the Saviour prescribes.

In our days nothing is important, and nothing is sacred, for our cosmopolitan philosophers.

Botarelli publishes in a pamphlet all the ceremonies of the Freemasons, and the only sentence passed on him is:

"He is a scoundrel. We knew that before!"

A prince in Naples, and M. Hamilton in his own house, perform the miracle of St. Januarius; they are, most likely, very merry over their performance, and many more with them. Yet the king wears on his royal breast a star with the following device around the image of St. Januarius: *In sanguine fœdus.* In our days everything is inconsistent, and nothing has any meaning. Yet it

is right to go ahead, for to stop on the road would be to go from bad to worse.

We left Lyons in the public diligence, and were five days on our road to Paris. Baletti had given notice of his departure to his family; they therefore knew when to expect him. We were eight in the coach and our seats were very uncomfortable, for it was a large oval in shape, so that no one had a corner. If that vehicle had been built in a country where equality was a principle hallowed by the laws, it would not have been a bad illustration. I thought it was absurd, but I was in a foreign country, and I said nothing. Besides, being an Italian, would it have been right for me not to admire everything which was French, and particularly in France?—Example, an oval diligence: I respected the fashion, but I found it detestable, and the singular motion of that vehicle had the same effect upon me as the rolling of a ship in a heavy sea. Yet it was well hung, but the worst jolting would have disturbed me less.

As the diligence undûlates in the rapidity of its pace, it has been called a gondola, but I was a judge of gondolas, and I thought that there was no family likeness between the coach and the Venetian boats which, with two hearty rowers, glide along so swiftly and smoothly.

The effect of the movement was that I had to throw up whatever was on my stomach. My travelling companions thought me bad company,

but they did not say so. I was in France and among Frenchmen, who know what politeness is. They only remarked that very likely I had eaten too much at my supper, and a Parisian abbé, in order to excuse me, observed that my stomach was weak. A discussion arose.

"Gentlemen," I said, in my vexation, and rather angrily, "you are all wrong, for my stomach is excellent, and I have not had any supper."

Thereupon an elderly man told me, with a voice full of sweetness, that I ought not to say that the gentlemen were wrong, though I might say that they were not right, thus imitating Cicero, who, instead of declaring to the Romans that Catilina and the other conspirators were dead, only said that they had lived.

"Is it not the same thing?"

"I beg your pardon, sir, one way of speaking is polite, the other is not." And after treating me to a long dissertion on politeness, he concluded by saying, with a smile, "I suppose you are an Italian?"

"Yes, I am, but would you oblige me by telling me how you have found it out?"

"Oh! I guessed it from the attention with which you have listened to my long prattle."

Everybody laughed, and, I, much pleased with his eccentricity, began to coax him. He was the tutor of a young boy of twelve or thirteen years

who was seated near him. I made him give me during the journey lessons in French politeness, and when we parted he took me apart in a friendly manner, saying that he wished to make me a small present.

"What is it?"

"You must abandon, and, if I may say so, forget, the particle *non,* which you use frequently at random. *Non* is not a French word; instead of that unpleasant monosyllable, say, *Pardon. Non* is equal to giving the lie: never say it, or prepare yourself to give and to receive sword-stabs every moment."

"I thank you, monsieur, your present is very precious, and I promise you never to say *non* again."

During the first fortnight of my stay in Paris, it seemed to me that I had become the most faulty man alive, for I never ceased begging pardon. I even thought, one evening at the theatre, that I should have a quarrel for having begged somebody's pardon in the wrong place. A young fop, coming to the pit, trod on my foot, and I hastened to say,—

"Your pardon, sir."

"Sir, pardon me yourself."

"No, yourself."

"Yourself!"

"Well, sir, let us pardon and embrace one another!"

The embrace put a stop to the discussion.

One day during the journey, having fallen asleep from fatigue in the inconvenient gondola, someone pushed my arm.

"Ah, sir! look at that mansion!"

"I see it; what of it?"

"Ah! I pray you, do you not find it . . . ."

"I find nothing particular; and you?"

"Nothing wonderful, if it were not situated at a distance of forty leagues from Paris. But here! Ah! would my *badauds* of Parisians believe that such a beautiful mansion can be found forty leagues distant from the metropolis? How ignorant a man is when he has never travelled!"

"You are quite right."

That man was a Parisian and a *badaud* to the backbone, like a Gaul in the days of Cæsar.

But if the Parisians are lounging about from morning till night, enjoying everything around them, a foreigner like myself ought to have been a greater *badaud* than they! The difference between us was that, being accustomed to see things such as they are, I was astonished at seeing them often covered with a mask which changed their nature, while their surprise often arose from their suspecting what the mask concealed.

What delighted me, on my arrival in Paris, was the magnificent road made by Louis XV., the cleanliness of the hotels, the excellent fare they

give, the quickness of the service, the excellent beds, the modest appearance of the attendant, who generally is the most accomplished girl of the house, and whose decency, modest manners, and neatness, inspire the most shameless libertine with respect. Where is the Italian who is pleased with the effrontery and the insolence of the hotel-waiters in Italy? In my days, people did not know in France what it was to overcharge; it was truly the home of foreigners. True, they had the unpleasantness of often witnessing acts of odious despotism, *lettres de cachet,* etc.; it was the despotism of a king. Since that time the French have the despotism of the people. Is it less obnoxious?

We dined at Fontainebleau, a name derived from *Fontaine-belle-eau;* and when we were only two leagues from Paris we saw a berlin advancing towards us. As it came near the diligence, my friend Baletti called out to the postillions to stop. In the berlin was his mother, who offered me the welcome given to an expected friend. His mother was the celebrated actress Silvia, and when I had been introduced to her she said to me,—

"I hope, sir, that my son's friend will accept a share of our family supper this evening."

I accepted gratefully, sat down again in the gondola, Baletti got into the berlin with his mother, and we continued our journey.

On reaching Paris, I found a servant of Silva's waiting for me with a coach; he accompanied me

to my lodging to leave my luggage, and we repaired to Baletti's house, which was only fifty yards distant from my dwelling.

Baletti presented me to his father, who was known under the name of Mario. Silvia and Mario were the stage names assumed by M. and Madame Baletti, and at that time it was the custom in France to call the Italian actors by the names they had on the stage. *Bon jour, Monsieur Arlequin; bon jour, Monsieur Pantalon:* such was the manner in which the French used to address the actors who personified those characters on the stage.

CHAPTER VI

MY APPRENTICESHIP IN PARIS — PORTRAITS — ODDITIES—ALL SORTS OF THINGS

To celebrate the arrival of her son, Silvia gave a splendid supper to which she had invited all her relatives, and it was a good opportunity for me to make their acquaintance. Baletti's father, who had just recovered from a long illness, was not with us, but we had his father's sister, who was older than Mario. She was known, under her theatrical name of Flaminia, in the literary world by several translations, but I had a great wish to make her acquaintance less on that account than in consequence of the story, known throughout Italy, of the stay that three literary men of great fame had made in Paris. Those three *literati* were the Marquis Maffei, the Abbé Conti, and Pierre Jacques Martelli, who became enemies, according to public rumour, owing to the belief entertained by each of them that he possessed the favours of the actress, and, being men of learning, they fought with the pen. Martelli composed a satire

against Maffei, in which he designated him by the anagram of *Femia.*

I had been announced to Flaminia as a candidate for literary fame, and she thought she honoured me by addressing me at all, but she was wrong, for she displeased me greatly by her face, her manners, her style, even by the sound of her voice. Without saying it positively, she made me understand that, being herself an illustrious member of the republic of letters, she was well aware that she was speaking to an insect. She seemed as if she wanted to dictate to everybody around her, and she very likely thought that she had the right to do so at the age of sixty, particularly towards a young novice only twenty-five years old, who had not yet contributed anything to the literary treasury. In order to please her, I spoke to her of the Abbé Conti, and I had occasion to quote two lines of that profound writer. Madam corrected me with a patronizing air for my pronunciation of the word *scevra,* which means divided, saying that it ought to be pronounced *sceura,* and she added that I ought to be very glad to have learned so much on the first day of my arrival in Paris, telling me that it would be an important day in my life.

"Madam, I came here to learn and not to unlearn. You will kindly allow me to tell you that the pronunciation of that word *scevra* with a *v,* and not *sceura* with a *u,* because it is a contraction of *sceverra.*"

"It remains to be seen which of us is wrong."

"You, madam, according to Ariosto, who makes *scevra* rhyme with *perscvra,* and the rhyme would be false with *sceura,* which is not an Italian word."

She would have kept up the discussion, but her husband, a man eighty years of age, told her that she was wrong. She held her tongue, but from that time she told everybody that I was an impostor.

Her husband, Louis Riccoboni, better known as Lelio, was the same who had brought the Italian company to Paris in 1716, and placed it at the service of the regent: he was a man of great merit. He had been very handsome, and justly enjoyed the esteem of the public, in consequence not only of his talent but also of the purity of his life.

During supper my principal occupation was to study Silvia, who then enjoyed the greatest reputation, and I judged her to be even above it. She was then about fifty years old, her figure was elegant, her air noble, her manners graceful and easy; she was affable, witty, kind to everybody, simple and unpretending. Her face was an enigma, for it inspired everyone with the warmest sympathy, and yet if you examined it attentively there was not one beautiful feature; she could not be called handsome, but no one could have thought her ugly. Yet she was not one of those women

who are neither handsome nor ugly, for she possessed a certain something which struck one at first sight and captivated the interest. Then what was she?

Beautiful, certainly, but owing to charms unknown to all those who, not being attracted towards her by an irresistible feeling which compelled them to love her, had not the courage to study her, or the constancy to obtain a thorough knowledge of her.

Silvia was the adoration of France, and her talent was the real support of all the comedies which the greatest authors wrote for her, especially of the plays of Marivaux, for without her his comedies would never have gone to posterity. Never was an actress found who could replace her, and to find one it would be necessary that she should unite in herself all the perfections which Silvia possessed for the difficult profession of the stage: action, voice, intelligence, wit, countenance, manners, and a deep knowledge of the human heart. In Silvia every quality was from nature, and the art which gave the last touch of perfection to her qualities was never seen.

To the qualities which I have just mentioned, Silvia added another which surrounded her with a brilliant halo, and the absence of which would not have prevented her from being the shining star of the stage: she led a virtuous life. She had been anxious to have friends, but she had dismissed all

lovers, refusing to avail herself of a privilege which she could easily have enjoyed, but which would have rendered her contemptible in her own estimation. This irreproachable conduct obtained for her a reputation of respectability which, at her age, would have been held as ridiculous and even insulting by any other woman belonging to the same profession, and many ladies of the highest rank honoured her with her friendship more even than with their patronage. Never did the capricious audience of a Parisian pit dare to hiss Silvia, not even in her performance of characters which the public disliked, and it was the general opinion that she was in every way above her profession.

Silvia did not think that her good conduct was a merit, for she knew that she was virtuous only because her self-love compelled her to be so, and she never exhibited any pride or assumed any superiority towards her theatrical sisters, although, satisfied to shine by their talent or their beauty, they cared little about rendering themselves conspicuous by their virtue. Silvia loved them all, and they all loved her; she always was the first to praise, openly and with good faith, the talent of her rivals; but she lost nothing by it, because, being their superior in talent and enjoying a spotless reputation, her rivals could not rise above her.

Nature deprived that charming woman of ten years of life; she became consumptive at the age of

sixty, ten years after I had made her acquaintance. The climate of Paris often proves fatal to our Italian actresses. Two years before her death I saw her perform the character of Marianne in the comedy of Marivaux, and in spite of her age and declining health the illusion was complete. She died in my presence, holding her daughter in her arms, and she was giving her the advice of a tender mother five minutes before she breathed her last. She was honourably buried in the church of St. Sauveur, without the slightest opposition from the venerable priest, who, far from sharing the anti-christian intolerancy of the clergy in general, said that her profession as an actress had not hindered her from being a good Christian, and that the earth was the common mother of all human beings, as Jesus Christ had been the Saviour of all mankind.

You will forgive me, dear reader, if I have made you attend the funeral of Silvia ten years before her death; believe me I have no intention of performing a miracle; you may console yourself with the idea that I shall spare you that unpleasant task when poor Silvia dies.

Her only daughter, the object of her adoration, was seated next to her at the supper-table. She was then only nine years old, and being entirely taken up by her mother I paid no attention to her; my interest in her was to come.

After the supper, which was protracted to a late hour, I repaired to the house of Madame

Quinson, my landlady, where I found myself very comfortable. When I woke in the morning, the said Madame Quinson came to my room to tell me that a servant was outside and wished to offer me his services. I asked her to send him in, and I saw a man of very small stature; that did not please me, and I told him so.

"My small stature, your honour, will be a guarantee that I shall never borrow your clothes to go to some amorous rendezvous."

"Your name?"

"Any name you please."

"What do you mean? I want the name by which you are known."

"I have none. Every master I serve calls me according to his fancy, and I have served more than fifty in my life. You may call me what you like."

"But you must have a family name."

"I never had any family. I had a name, I believe, in my young days, but I have forgotten it since I have been in service. My name has changed with every new master."

"Well! I shall call you *Esprit*."

"You do me a great honour."

"Here, go and get me change for a louis."

"I have it, sir."

"I see you are rich."

"At your service, sir."

"Where can I enquire about you?"

"At the agency for servants. Madame Quinson, besides, can answer your enquiries. Everybody in Paris knows me."

"That is enough. I shall give you thirty sous a day; you must find your own clothes: you will sleep where you like, and you must be here at seven o'clock every morning."

Baletti called on me and entreated me to take my meals every day at his house. After his visit I told *Esprit* to take me to the Palais-Royal, and I left him at the gates. I felt the greatest curiosity about that renowned garden, and at first I examined everything. I see a rather fine garden, walks lined with big trees, fountains, high houses all round the garden, a great many men and women walking about, benches here and there forming shops for the sale of newspapers, perfumes, tooth-picks, and other trifles. I see a quantity of chairs for hire at the rate of one sou, men reading the newspaper under the shade of the trees, girls and men breakfasting either alone or in company, waiters who were rapidly going up and down a narrow staircase hidden under the foliage.

I sit down at a small table: a waiter comes immediately to enquire my wishes. I ask for some chocolate made with water; he brings me some, but very bad, although served in a splendid silver-gilt cup. I tell him to give me some coffee, if it is good.

"Excellent, I made it myself yesterday."

"Yesterday! I do not want it."

"The milk is very good."

"Milk! I never drink any. Make me a cup of fresh coffee without milk."

"Without milk! Well, sir, we never make coffee but in the afternoon. Would you like a good bavaroise, or a decanter of orgeat?"

"Yes, give me the orgeat."

I find that beverage delicious, and make up my mind to have it daily for my breakfast. I enquire from the waiter whether there is any news; he answers that the dauphine has been delivered of a prince. An abbé, seated at a table close by, says to him,—

"You are mad, she has given birth to a princess."

A third man comes forward and exclaims,—

"I have just returned from Versailles, and the dauphine has not been delivered either of a prince or of a princess."

Then, turning towards me, he says that I look like a foreigner, and when I say that I am an Italian he begins to speak to me of the court, of the city, of the theatres, and at last he offers to accompany me everywhere. I thank him and take my leave. The abbé rises at the same time, walks with me, and tells me the names of all the women we meet in the garden.

A young man comes up to him, they embrace one another, and the abbé presents him to me as

a learned Italian scholar. I address him in Italian, and he answers very wittily, but his way of speaking makes me smile, and I tell him why. He expressed himself exactly in the style of Boccacio. My remark pleases him, but I soon prove to him that it is not the right way to speak, however perfect may have been the language of that ancient writer. In less than a quarter of an hour we are excellent friends, for we find that our tastes are the same.

My new friend was a poet as I was; he was an admirer of Italian literature, while I admired the French.

We exchange addresses, and promise to see one another very often.

I see a crowd in one corner of the garden, everybody standing still and looking up. I enquire from my friend whether there is anything wonderful going on.

"These persons are watching the meridian; everyone holds his watch in his hand in order to regulate it exactly at noon."

"Is there not a meridian everywhere?"

"Yes, but the meridian of the Palais-Royal is the most exact."

I laugh heartily.

"Why do you laugh?"

"Because it is impossible for all meridians not to be the same. That is true *badauderie.*"

My friend looks at me for for a moment, then

he laughs likewise, and supplies me with ample food to ridicule the worthy Parisians. We leave the Palais-Royal through the main gate, and I observe another crowd of people before a shop, on the sign-board of which I read "At the Sign of the Civet Cat."

"What is the matter here?"

"Now, indeed, you are going to laugh. All these honest persons are waiting their turn to get their snuff-boxes filled."

"Is there no other dealer in snuff?"

"It is sold everywhere, but for the last three weeks nobody will use any snuff but that sold at the 'Civet Cat.'"

"Is it better than anywhere else?"

"Perhaps it is not as good, but since it has been brought into fashion by the Duchesse de Chartres, nobody will have any other."

"But how did she manage to render it so fashionable?"

"Simply by stopping her carriage two or three times before the shop to have her snuff-box filled, and by saying aloud to the young girl who handed back the box that her snuff was the very best in Paris. The *badauds,* who never fail to congregate near the carriage of princes, no matter if they have seen them a hundred times, or if they know them to be as ugly as monkeys, repeated the words of the duchess everywhere, and that was enough to send here all the snuff-takers of

the capital in a hurry. This woman will make a fortune, for she sells at least one hundred crowns' worth of snuff every day."

"Very likely the duchess has no idea of the good she has done."

"Quite the reverse, for it was a cunning artifice on her part. The duchess, feeling interested in the newly-married young woman, and wishing to serve her in a delicate manner, thought of that expedient which has met with complete success. You cannot imagine how kind the Parisians are. You are now in the only country in the world where wit can make a fortune by selling either a genuine or a false article: in the first case, it receives the welcome of intelligent and talented people, and in the second, fools are always ready to reward it, for silliness is truly a characteristic of the people here, and, however wonderful it may appear, silliness is the daughter of wit. Therefore it is not a paradox to say that the French would be wiser if they were less witty.

"The gods worshipped here—although no altars are raised for them—are Novelty and Fashion. Let a man run, and everybody will run after him. The crowd will not stop, unless the man is proved to be mad; but to prove it is indeed a difficult task, because we have a crowd of men who, mad from their birth, are still considered wise.

"The snuff of the 'Civet Cat' is but one example of the facility with which the crowd can be attracted

to one particular spot. The king was one day hunting, and found himself at the Neuilly Bridge; being thirsty, he wanted a glass of ratafia. He stopped at the door of a drinking-booth, and by the most lucky chance the poor keeper of the place happened to have a bottle of that liquor. The king, after he had drunk a small glass, fancied a second one, and said that he had never tasted such delicious ratafia in his life. That was enough to give the ratafia of the good man of Neuilly the reputation of being the best in Europe: the king had said so. The consequence was that the most brilliant society frequented the tavern of the delighted publican, who is now a very wealthy man, and has built on the very spot a splendid house on which can be read the following rather comic motto: *"Ex liquidis solidum,"* which certainly came out of the head of one of the forty immortals. Which gods must the worthy tavern-keeper worship? Silliness, frivolity, and mirth."

"It seems to me," I replied, "that such approval. such ratification of the opinion expressed by the king, the princes of the blood, etc., is rather a proof of the affection felt for them by the nation, for the French carry that affection to such an extent that they believe them infallible."

"It is certain that everything here causes foreigners to believe that the French people adore the king, but all thinking men here know well enough that there is more show than reality in that

adoration, and the court has no confidence in it. When the king comes to Paris, everybody calls out, *'Vive le Roi!'* because some idle fellow begins, or because some policeman has given the signal from the midst of the crowd, but it is really a cry which has no importance, a cry given out of cheerfulness, sometimes out of fear, and which the king himself does not accept as gospel. He does not feel comfortable in Paris, and he prefers being in Versailles, surrounded by twenty-five thousand men who protect him against the fury of that same people of Paris, who, if ever they became wiser, might very well one day call out, 'Death to the King!' instead of, 'Long life to the King!' Louis XIV. was well aware of it, and several councillors of the upper chamber lost their lives for having advised the assembling of the states-general in order to find some remedy for the misfortunes of the country. France never had any love for any kings, with the exception of St. Louis, of Louis XII., and of the great and good Henry IV.; and even in the last case the love of the nation was not sufficient to defend the king against the dagger of the Jesuits, an accursed race, the enemy of nations as well as of kings. The present king, who is weak and entirely led by his ministers, said candidly at the time he was just recovering from illness, 'I am surprised at the rejoicings of the people in consequence of my health being restored, for I cannot imagine why

they should love me so dearly.' Many kings might repeat the same words, at least if love is to be measured according to the amount of good actually done. That candid remark of Louis XV. has been highly praised, but some philosopher of the court ought to have informed him that he was so much loved because he had been surnamed *le bien aimé.*"

"Surname or nickname; but are there any philosophers at the court of France?"

"No, for philosophers and courtiers are as widely different as light and darkness; but there are some men of intelligence who champ the bit from motives of ambition and interest."

As we were thus conversing, M. Patu (such was the name of my new acquaintance) escorted me as far as the door of Silvia's house; he congratulated me upon being one of her friends, and we parted company.

I found the amiable actress in good company. She introduced me to all her guests, and gave me some particulars respecting every one of them. The name of Crébillon struck my ear.

"What, sir!" I said to him, "am I fortunate enough to see you? For eight years you have charmed me, for eight years I have longed to know you. Listen, I beg of you."

I then recited the finest passage of his *Zénobie et Rhadamiste,* which I had translated into blank verse. Silvia was delighted to see the pleasure enjoyed by Crébillon in hearing, at the age of

eighty, his own lines in a language which he knew thoroughly and loved as much as his own. He himself recited the same passage in French, and politely pointed out the parts in which he thought that I had improved on the original. I thanked him, but I was not deceived by his compliment.

We sat down to supper, and, being asked what I had already seen in Paris, I related everything I had done, omitting only my conversation with Patu. After I had spoken for a long time, Crébillon, who had evidently observed better than anyone else the road I had chosen in order to learn the good as well as the bad qualities of his countrymen, said to me,—

"For the first day, sir, I think that what you have done gives great hopes of you, and without any doubt you will make rapid progress. You tell your story well, and you speak French in such a way as to be perfectly understood; yet all you say is only Italian dressed in French. That is a novelty which causes you to be listened to with interest, and which captivates the attention of your audience; I must even add that your Franco-Italian language is just the thing to enlist in your favour the sympathy of those who listen to you, because it is singular, new, and because you are in a country where everybody worships those two divinities—novelty and singularity. Nevertheless, you must begin to-morrow and apply yourself in good earnest, in order to acquire a thorough know-

ledge of our language, for the same persons who warmly applaud you now, will, in two or three months, laugh at you."

"I believe it, sir, and that is what I fear; therefore the principal object of my visit here is to devote myself entirely to the study of the French language. But, sir, how shall I find a teacher? I am a very unpleasant pupil, always asking questions, curious, troublesome, insatiable, and even supposing that I could meet with the teacher I require, I am afraid I am not rich enough to pay him."

"For fifty years, sir, I have been looking out for a pupil such as you have just described yourself, and I would willingly pay you myself if you would come to my house and receive my lessons. I reside in the Marais, Rue de Douze Portes. I have the best Italian poets. I will make you translate them into French, and you need not be afraid of my finding you insatiable."

I accepted with joy. I did not know how to express my gratitude, but both his offer and the few words of my answer bore the stamp of truth and frankness.

Crébillon was a giant; he was six feet high, and three inches taller than I. He had a good appetite, could tell a good story without laughing, was celebrated for his witty repartees and his sociable manners, but he spent his life at home, seldom going out, and seeing hardly anyone

because he always had a pipe in his mouth and was surrounded by at least twenty cats, with which he would amuse himself all day. He had an old housekeeper, a cook, and a man-servant. His housekeeper had the management of everything; she never allowed him to be in need of anything, and she gave no account of his money, which she kept altogether, because he never asked her to render any accounts. The expression of Crébillon's face was that of the lion's or of the cat's, which is the same thing. He was one of the royal censors, and he told me that it was an amusement for him. His housekeeper was in the habit of reading him the works brought for his examination, and she would stop reading when she came to a passage which, in her opinion, deserved his censure, but sometimes they were of a different opinion, and then their discussions were truly amusing. I once heard the housekeeper send away an author with these words:

"Come again next week; *we* have had no time to examine your manuscript."

During a whole year I paid M. Crébillon three visits every week, and from him I learned all I know of the French language, but I found it impossible to get rid of my Italian idioms. I remark that turn easily enough when I meet with it in other people, but it flows naturally from my pen without my being aware of it. I am satisfied that, whatever I may do, I shall never be able to recog-

nize it any more than I can find out in what consists the bad Latin style so constantly alleged against Livy.

I composed a stanza of eight verses on some subject which I do not recollect, and I gave it to Crébillon, asking him to correct it. He read it attentively, and said to me,—

"These eight verses are good and regular, the thought is fine and truly poetical, the style is perfect, and yet the stanza is bad."

"How so?"

"I do not know. I cannot tell you what is wanting. Imagine that you see a man handsome, well made, amiable, witty—in fact, perfect, according to your most severe judgment. A woman comes in, sees him, looks at him, and goes away telling you that the man does not please her. 'But what fault do you find in him, madam?' 'None, only he does not please me.' You look again at the man, you examine him a second time, and you find that, in order to give him a heavenly voice, he has been deprived of that which constitutes a man, and you are compelled to acknowledge that a spontaneous feeling has stood the woman in good stead."

It was by that comparison that Crébillon explained to me a thing almost inexplicable, for taste and feeling alone can account for a thing which is subject to no rule whatever.

We spoke a great deal of Louis XIV., whom

Crébillon had known well for fifteen years, and he related several very curious anecdotes which were generally unknown. Amongst other things he assured me that the Siamese ambassadors were cheats paid by Madame de Maintenon. He told us likewise that he had never finished his tragedy of Cromwell, because the king had told him one day not to wear out his pen on a scoundrel.

Crébillon mentioned likewise his tragedy of Catilina, and he told me that, in his opinion, it was the most deficient of his works, but that he never would have consented, even to make a good tragedy, to represent Cæsar as a young man, because he would in that case have made the public laugh, as they would do if Madea were to appear previous to her acquaintance with Jason.

He praised the talent of Voltaire very highly, but he accused him of having stolen from him, Crébillon, the scene of the senate. He, however, rendered him full justice, saying that he was a true historian, and able to write history as well as tragedies, but that he unfortunately adulterated history by mixing with it such a number of light anecdotes and tales for the sake of rendering it more attractive. According to Crébillon, the Man with the Iron Mask was nothing but an idle tale, and he had been assured of it by Louis XIV. himself.

On the day of my first meeting with Crébillon at Silvia's, *Cénie,* a play by Madame de Graffigny,

was performed at the Italian Theatre, and I went away early in order to get a good seat in the pit.

The ladies all covered with diamonds, who were taking possession of the private boxes, engrossed all my interest and all my attention. I wore a very fine suit, but my open ruffles and the buttons all along my coat shewed at once that I was a foreigner, for the fashion was not the same in Paris. I was gaping in the air and listlessly looking round, when a gentleman, splendidly dressed, and three times stouter than I, came up and enquired whether I was a foreigner. I answered affirmatively, and he politely asked me how I liked Paris. I praised Paris very warmly. But at that moment a very stout lady, brilliant with diamonds, entered the box near us. Her enormous size astonished me, and, like a fool, I said to the gentleman:

"Who is that fat sow?"

"She is the wife of this fat pig."

"Ah! I beg your pardon a thousand times!"

But my stout gentleman cared nothing for my apologies, and very far from being angry he almost choked with laughter. This was the happy result of the practical and natural philosophy which Frenchmen cultivate so well, and which insures the happiness of their existence under an appearance of frivolity!

I was confused, I was in despair, but the stout gentleman continued to laugh heartily. At last

he left the pit, and a minute afterwards I saw him enter the box and speak to his wife. I was keeping an eye on them without daring to look at them openly, and suddenly the lady, following the example of her husband, burst into a loud laugh. Their mirth making me more uncomfortable, I was leaving the pit, when the husband called out to me, "Sir! Sir!"

"I could not go away without being guilty of impoliteness, and I went up to their box. Then, with a serious countenance and with great affability, he begged my pardon for having laughed so much, and very graciously invited me to come to his house and sup with them that same evening. I thanked him politely, saying that I had a previous engagement. But he renewed his entreaties, and his wife pressing me in the most engaging manner I told them, in order to prove that I was not trying to elude their invitation, that I was expected to sup at Silvia's house.

"In that case I am certain," said the gentleman, "of obtaining your release if you do not object. Allow me to go myself to Silvia."

It would have been uncourteous on my part to resist any longer. He left the box and returned almost immediately with my friend Baletti, who told me that his mother was delighted to see me making such excellent acquaintances, and that she would expect to see me at dinner the next day. He whispered to me that my new acquaintance

was M. de Beauchamp, Receiver-General of Taxes.

As soon as the performance was over, I offered my hand to madame, and we drove to their mansion in a magnificent carriage. There I found the abundance or rather the profusion which in Paris is exhibited by the men of finance; numerous society, high play, good cheer, and open cheerfulness. The supper was not over till one o'clock in the morning. Madame's private carriage drove me to my lodgings. That house offered me a kind welcome during the whole of my stay in Paris, and I must add that my new friends proved very useful to me. Some persons assert that foreigners find the first fortnight in Paris very dull, because a little time is necessary to get introduced, but I was fortunate enough to find myself established on as good a footing as I could desire within twenty-four hours, and the consequence was that I felt delighted with Paris, and certain that my stay would prove an agreeable one.

The next morning Patu called and made me a present of his prose panegyric on the Maréchal de Saxe. We went out together and took a walk in the Tuileries, where he introduced me to Madame du Boccage, who made a good jest in speaking of the Maréchal de Saxe.

"It is singular," she said, "that we cannot have a *De profundis* for a man who makes us sing the Te Deum so often."

As we left the Tuileries, Patu took me to the

house of a celebrated actress of the opera, Mademoiselle Le Fel, the favourite of all Paris, and member of the Royal Academy of Music. She had three very young and charming children, who were fluttering around her like butterflies.

"I adore them," she said to me.

"They deserve adoration for their beauty," I answered, "although they have all a different cast of countenance."

"No wonder! The eldest is the son of the Duke d'Anneci, the second of Count d'Egmont, and the youngest is the offspring of Maison-Rouge, who has just married the Romainville."

"Ah! pray excuse me, I thought you were the mother of the three."

"You were not mistaken, I am their mother."

As she said these words she looked at Patu, and both burst into hearty laughter which did not make me blush, but which shewed me my blunder.

I was a novice in Paris, and I had not been accustomed to see women encroach upon the privilege which men alone generally enjoy. Yet Mademoiselle Le Fel was not a bold-faced woman; she was even rather lady-like, but she was what is called above prejudices. If I had known the manners of the time better, I should have been aware that such things were every-day occurrences, and that the noblemen who thus sprinkled their progeny everywhere were in the habit of leaving

their children in the hands of their mothers, who were well paid. The more fruitful, therefore, these ladies were, the greater was their income.

My want of experience often led me into serious blunders, and Mademoiselle Le Fel would, I have no doubt, have laughed at anyone telling her that I had some wit, after the stupid mistake of which I had been guilty.

Another day, being at the house of Lani, ballet-master of the opera, I saw five or six young girls of thirteen or fourteen years of age accompanied by their mothers, and all exhibiting that air of modesty which is the characteristic of a good education. I addressed a few gallant words to them, and they answered me with down-cast eyes. One of them having complained of the head-ache, I offered her my smelling-bottle, and one of her companions said to her,—

"Very likely you did not sleep well last night."

"Oh! it is not that," answered the modest-looking Agnes, "I think I am in the family-way."

On receiving this unexpected reply from a girl I had taken for a maiden, I said to her,—

"I should never have supposed that you were married, madam."

She looked at me with evident surprise for a moment. then she turned towards her friend, and both began to laugh immoderately. Ashamed, but for them more than myself, I left the house with a firm resolution never again to take virtue for

granted in a class of women amongst whom it is so scarce. To look for, even to suppose, modesty, amongst the nymphs of the green room, is, indeed, to be very foolish; they pride themselves upon having none, and laugh at those who are simple enough to suppose them better than they are.

Thanks to my friend Patu, I made the acquaintance of all the women who enjoyed some reputation in Paris. He was fond of the fair sex, but unfortunately for him he had not a constitution like mine, and his love of pleasure killed him very early. If he had lived, he would have gone down to posterity in the wake of Voltaire, but he paid the debt of nature at the age of thirty.

I learned from him the secret which several young French *literati* employ in order to make certain of the perfection of their prose, when they want to write anything requiring as perfect a style as they can obtain, such as panegyrics, funeral orations, eulogies, dedications, etc. It was by surprise that I wrested that secret from Patu.

Being at his house one morning, I observed on his table several sheets of paper covered with dodecasyllabic blank verse.

I read a dozen of them, and I told him that, although the verses were very fine, the reading caused me more pain than pleasure.

"They express the same ideas as the panegyric of the Maréchal de Saxe, but I confess that your prose pleases me a great deal more."

"My prose would not have pleased you so much, if it had not been at first composed in blank verse."

"Then you take very great trouble for nothing."

"No trouble at all, for I have not the slightest difficulty in writing that sort of poetry. I write it as easily as prose."

"Do you think that your prose is better when you compose it from your own poetry?"

"No doubt of it, it is much better, and I also secure the advantage that my prose is not full of half verses which flow from the pen of the writer without his being aware of it."

"Is that a fault?"

"A great one and not to be forgiven. Prose intermixed with occasional verses is worse than prosaic poetry."

"Is it true that the verses which, like parasites, steal into a funeral oration, must be sadly out of place?"

"Certainly. Take the example of Tacitus, who begins his history of Rome by these words: *Urbem Romam a principio reges habuere.* They form a very poor Latin hexameter, which the great historian certainly never made on purpose, and which he never remarked when he revised his work, for there is no doubt that, if he had observed it, he would have altered that sentence. Are not such verses considered a blemish in Italian prose?"

"Decidedly. But I must say that a great

many poor writers have purposely inserted such verses into their prose, believing that they would make it more euphonious. Hence the *tawdriness* which is justly alleged against much Italian literature. But I suppose you are the only writer who takes so much pains."

"The only one? Certainly not. All the authors who can compose blank verses very easily, as I can, employ them when they intend to make a fair copy of their prose. Ask Crébillon, the Abbé de Voisenon, LaHarpe, anyone you like, and they will all tell you the same thing. Voltaire was the first to have recourse to that art in the small pieces in which his prose is truly charming. For instance, the epistle to Madame du Châtelet, which is magnificent. Read it, and if you find a single hemistich in it I will confess myself in the wrong."

I felt some curiosity about the matter, and I asked Crébillon about it. He told me that Patu was right, but he added that he had never practised that art himself.

Patu wished very much to take me to the opera in order to witness the effect produced upon me by the performance, which must truly astonish an Italian. *Les Fêtes Vénitiennes* was the title of the opera which was in vogue just then—a title full of interest for me. We went for our forty sous to the pit, in which, although the audience was standing, the company was excellent, for the opera was the favourite amusement of the Parisians.

After a symphony, very fine in its way and executed by an excellent orchestra, the curtain rises, and I see a beautiful scene representing the small St. Mark's Square in Venice, taken from the Island of St. George, but I am shocked to see the ducal palace on my left, and the tall steeple on my right, that is to say the very reverse of reality. I laugh at this ridiculous mistake, and Patu, to whom I say why I am laughing, cannot help joining me. The music, very fine although in the ancient style, at first amused me on account of its novelty, but it soon wearied me. The melopæia fatigued me by its constant and tedious monotony, and by the shrieks given out of season. That melopæia of the French replaces—at least they think so—the Greek melopæia and our recitative which they dislike, but which they would admire if they understood Italian.

The action of the opera was limited to a day in the carnival, when the Venetians are in the habit of promenading masked in St. Mark's Square. The stage was animated by gallants, procuresses, and women amusing themselves with all sorts of intrigues. The costumes were whimsical and erroneous, but the whole was amusing. I laughed very heartily, and it was truly a curious sight for a Venetian, when I saw the Doge followed by twelve Councillors appear on the stage, all dressed in the most ludicrous style, and dancing a *pas d'ensemble*. Suddenly the whole of the pit burst

into loud applause at the appearance of a tall, well-made dancer, wearing a mask and an enormous black wig, the hair of which went half-way down his back, and dressed in a robe open in front and reaching to his heels. Patu said, almost reverently, "It is the inimitable Duprès." I had heard of him before, and became attentive. I saw that fine figure coming forward with measured steps, and when the dancer had arrived in front of the stage, he raised slowly his rounded arms, stretched them gracefully backward and forward, moved his feet with precision and lightness, took a few small steps, made some battements and pirouettes, and disappeared like a butterfly. The whole had not lasted half a minute. The applause burst from every part of the house. I was astonished, and asked my friend the cause of all those bravos.

"We applaud the grace of Duprès and the divine harmony of his movements. He is now sixty years of age, and those who saw him forty years ago say that he is always the same."

"What! Has he never danced in a different style?"

"He could not have danced in a better one, for his style is perfect, and what can you want above perfection?"

"Nothing, unless it be a relative perfection."

"But here it is absolute. Duprès always does the same thing, and everyday we fancy we see it for the first time. Such is the power of the good

and beautiful, of the true and sublime, which speak to the soul. His dance is true harmony, the real dance, of which you have no idea in Italy."

At the end of the second act, Duprès appeared again, still with a mask, and danced to a different tune, but in my opinion doing exactly the same as before. He advanced to the very footlights, and stopped one instant in a graceful attitude. Patu wanted to force my admiration, and I gave way. Suddenly everyone round me exclaimed,—

"Look! look! he is developing himself!"

And in reality he was like an elastic body which, in developing itself, would get larger. I made Patu very happy by telling him that Duprès was truly very graceful in all his movements. Immediately after him we had a female dancer, who jumped about like a fury, cutting to right and left, but heavily, yet she was applauded *con furore*.

"This is," said Patu, "the famous Camargo. I congratulate you, my friend, upon having arrived in Paris in time to see her, for she has accomplished her twelfth lustre."

I confessed that she was a wonderful dancer.

"She is the first artist," continued my friend, "who has dared to spring and jump on a French stage. None ventured upon doing it before her, and, what is more extraordinary, she does not wear any drawers."

"I beg your pardon, but I saw . . . . "

"What? Nothing but her skin which, to

speak the truth, is not made of lilies and roses."

"The Camargo," I said, with an air of repentance, "does not please me. I like Duprès much better."

An elderly admirer of Camargo, seated on my left, told me that in her youth she could perform the *saut de basque* and even the *gargouillade,* and that nobody had ever seen her thighs, although she always danced without drawers.

"But if you never saw her thighs, how do you know that she does not wear silk tights?"

"Oh! that is one of those things which can easily be ascertained. I see you are a foreigner, sir."

"You are right."

But I was delighted at the French opera, with the rapidity of the scenic changes which are done like lightning, at the signal of a whistle—a thing entirely unknown in Italy. I likewise admired the start given to the orchestra by the *bâton* of the leader, but he disgusted me with the movements of his sceptre right and left, as if he thought that he could give life to all the instruments by the mere motion of his arm. I admired also the silence of the audience, a thing truly wonderful to an Italian, for it is with great reason that people complain of the noise made in Italy while the artists are singing, and ridicule the silence which prevails through the house as soon as the dancers make their appearance on the stage. One would imagine that all the intelligence of the Italians is in their

eyes. At the same time I must observe that there is not one country in the world in which extravagance and whimsicalness cannot be found, because the foreigner can make comparisons with what he has seen elsewhere, whilst the natives are not conscious of their errors. Altogether the opera pleased me, but the French comedy captivated me. There the French are truly in their element; they perform splendidly, in a masterly manner, and other nations cannot refuse them the palm which good taste and justice must award to their superiority. I was in the habit of going there every day, and although sometimes the audience was not composed of two hundred persons, the actors were perfect. I have seen *Le Misanthrope, L'Avare, Tartufe, Le Joueur, Le Glorieux,* and many other comedies; and, no matter how often I saw them, I always fancied it was the first time. I arrived in Paris to admire Sarrazin, La Dangeville, La Dumesnil, La Gaussin, La Clairon, Préville, and several actresses who, having retired from the stage, were living upon their pension, and delighting their circle of friends. I made, amongst others, the acquaintance of the celebrated Le Vasseur. I visited them all with pleasure, and they related to me several very curious anecdotes. They were generally most kindly disposed in every way.

One evening, being in the box of Le Vasseur, the performance was composed of a tragedy in

which a very handsome actress had the part of a dumb priestess.

"How pretty she is!" I said.

"Yes, charming," answered Le Vasseur, "She is the daughter of the actor who plays the confidant. She is very pleasant in company, and is an actress of good promise."

"I should be very happy to make her acquaintance."

"Oh! well, that is not difficult. Her father and mother are very worthy people, and they will be delighted if you ask them to invite you to supper. They will not disturb you; they will go to bed early, and will let you talk with their daughter as long as you please. You are in France, sir; here we know the value of life, and try to make the best of it. We love pleasure, and esteem ourselves fortunate when we can find the opportunity of enjoying life."

"That is truly charming, madam; but how could I be so bold as to invite myself to supper with worthy persons whom I do not know, and who have not the slightest knowledge of me?"

"Oh, dear me! What are you saying? We know everybody. You see how I treat you myself. After the performance, I shall be happy to introduce you, and the acquaintance will be made at once."

"I certainly must ask you to do me that honour, but another time."

"Whenever you like."

CHAPTER VII

MY BLUNDERS IN THE FRENCH LANGUAGE, MY SUCCESS, MY NUMEROUS ACQUAINTANCES—LOUIS XV.—MY BROTHER ARRIVES IN PARIS

All the Italian actors in Paris insisted upon entertaining me, in order to shew me their magnificence, and they all did it in a sumptuous style. Carlin Bertinazzi who played Harlequin, and was a great favourite of the Parisians, reminded me that he had already seen me thirteen years before in Padua, at the time of his return from St. Petersburg with my mother. He offered me an excellent dinner at the house of Madame de la Caillerie, where he lodged. That lady was in love with him. I complimented her upon four charming children whom I saw in the house. Her husband, who was present, said to me,—

"They are M. Carlin's children."

"That may be, sir, but you take care of them, and as they go by your name, of course they will acknowledge you as their father."

"Yes, I should be so legally; but M. Carlin

is too honest a man not to assume the care of his children whenever I may wish to get rid of them. He is well aware that they belong to him, and my wife would be the first to complain if he ever denied it."

The man was not what is called a good, easy fellow, far from it; but he took the matter in a philosophical way, and spoke of it with calm, and even with a sort of dignity. He was attached to Carlin by a warm friendship, and such things were then very common in Paris amongst people of a certain class. Two noblemen, Boufflers and Luxembourg, had made a friendly exchange of each other's wives, and each had children by the other's wife. The young Boufflers were called Luxembourg, and the young Luxembourg were called Boufflers. The descendants of those tiercelets are even now known in France under those names. Well, those who were in the secret of that domestic comedy laughed, as a matter of course, and it did not prevent the earth from moving according to the laws of gravitation.

The most wealthy of the Italian comedians in Paris was Pantaloon, the father of Coraline and Camille, and a well-known usurer. He also invited me to dine with his family, and I was delighted with his two daughters. The eldest, Coraline, was kept by the Prince of Monaco, son of the Duke of Valentinois, who was still alive; and Camille was enamoured of the Count of Melfort, the favourite

of the Duchess of Chartres, who had just become Duchess of Orleans by the death of her father-in-law.

Coraline was not so sprightly as Camille, but she was prettier. I began to make love to her as a young man of no consequence, and at hours which I thought would not attract attention: but all hours belong by right to the established lover, and I therefore found myself sometimes with her when the Prince of Monaco called to see her. At first I would bow to the prince and withdraw, but afterwards I was asked to remain, for as a general thing princes find a *tête-à-tête* with their mistresses rather wearisome. Therefore we used to sup together, and they both listened, while it was my province to eat, and to relate stories.

I bethought myself of paying my court to the prince, and he received my advances very well. One morning. as I called on Coraline, he said to me,—

"Ah! I am very glad to see you, for I have promised the Duchess of Rufé to present you to her, and we can go to her immediately."

Again a duchess! My star is decidedly in the ascendant. Well, let us go! We got into a *diable,* a sort of vehicle then very fashionable, and at eleven o'clock in the morning we were introduced to the duchess.

Dear reader, if I were to paint it with a faithful pen, my portrait of that lustful vixen would frighten

you. Imagine sixty winters heaped upon a face plastered with rouge, a blotched and pimpled complexion, emaciated and gaunt features, all the ugliness of libertinism stamped upon the countenance of that creature reclining upon the sofa. As soon as she sees me, she exclaims with rapid joy,—

"Ah! this is a good-looking man! Prince, it is very amiable on your part to bring him to me. Come and sit near me, my fine fellow!"

I obeyed respectfully, but a noxious smell of musk, which seemed to me almost corpse-like, nearly upset me. The infamous duchess had raised herself on the sofa and exposed all the nakedness of the most disgusting bosom, which would have caused the most courageous man to draw back. The prince, pretending to have some engagement, left us, saying that he would send his carriage for me in a short time.

As soon as we were alone, the plastered skeleton thrust its arms forward, and, without giving me time to know what I was about, the creature gave me a horrible kiss, and then one of her hands began to stray with the most bare-faced indecency.

"Let me see, my fine cock," she said, "if you have a fine . . . ."

I was shuddering, and resisted the attempt.

"Well, well! What a baby you are!" said

the disgusting Messaline; "are you such a novice?"

"No, madam; but . . . ."

"But what?"

"I have . . . ."

"Oh, the villain!" she exclaimed, loosing her hold; "what was I going to expose myself to!"

I availed myself of the opportunity, snatched my hat, and took to my heels, afraid lest the door-keeper should stop me.

I took a coach and drove to Coraline's, where I related the adventure. She laughed heartily, and agreed with me that the prince had played me a nasty trick. She praised the presence of mind with which I had invented an impediment, but she did not give me an opportunity of proving to her that I had deceived the duchess.

Yet I was not without hope, and suspected that she did not think me sufficiently enamoured of her.

Three or four days afterwards, however, as we had supper together and alone, I told her so many things, and I asked her so clearly to make me happy or else to dismiss me, that she gave me an appointment for the next day.

"To-morrow," she said, "the prince goes to Versailles, and he will not return until the day after; we will go together to the warren to hunt ferrets, and have no doubt we shall come back to Paris pleased with one another."

"That is right."

The next day at ten o'clock we took a coach, but as we were nearing the gate of the city a *vis-à-vis,* with servants in a foreign livery came up to us, and the person who was in it called out, "Stop! Stop!"

The person was the Chevalier de Wurtemburg, who, without deigning to cast even one glance on me, began to say sweet words to Coraline, and thrusting his head entirely out of his carriage he whispered to her. She answered him likewise in a whisper; then taking my hand, she said to me, laughingly,—

"I have some important business with this prince; go to the warren alone, my dear friend, enjoy the hunt, and come to me to-morrow."

And saying those words she got out, took her seat in the *vis-à-vis,* and I found myself very much in the position of Lot's wife, but not motionless.

Dear reader, if you have ever been in such a predicament you will easily realize the rage with which I was possessed: if you have never been served in that way, so much the better for you, but it is useless for me to try to give you an idea of my anger; you would not understand me.

I was disgusted with the coach, and I jumped out of it, telling the driver to go to the devil. I took the first hack which happened to pass, and drove straight to Patu's house, to whom I related

my adventure, almost foaming with rage. But very far from pitying me or sharing my anger, Patu, much wiser, laughed and said,—

"I wish with all my heart that the same thing might happen to me; for you are certain of possessing our beautiful Coraline the very first time you are with her."

"I would not have her, for now I despise her heartily."

"Your contempt ought to have come sooner. But, now that is too late to discuss the matter, I offer you, as a compensation, a dinner at the Hôtel du Roule."

"Most decidedly yes; it is an excellent idea. Let us go."

The Hôtel du Roule was famous in Paris, and I had not been there yet. The woman who kept it had furnished the place with great elegance, and she always had twelve or fourteen well-chosen nymphs, with all the conveniences that could be desired. Good cooking, good beds, cleanliness, solitary and beautiful groves. Her cook was an artist, and her wine-cellar excellent. Her name was Madame Paris; probably an assumed name, but it was good enough for the purpose. Protected by the police, she was far enough from Paris to be certain that those who visited her liberally appointed establishment were above the middle class. Everything was strictly regulated in her house and every pleasure was taxed at a reasonable tariff.

The prices were six francs for a breakfast with a nymph, twelve for dinner, and twice that sum to spend a whole night. I found the house even better than its reputation, and by far superior to the warren.

We took a coach, and Patu said to the driver,—

"To Chaillot."

"I understand, your honour."

After a drive of half an hour, we stopped before a gate on which could be read, "Hôtel du Roule."

The gate was closed. A porter, sporting long mustachioes, came out through a side-door and gravely examined us. He was most likely pleased with our appearance, for the gate was opened and we went in. A woman, blind of one eye, about forty years old, but with a remnant of beauty, came up, saluted us politely, and enquired whether we wished to have dinner. Our answer being affirmative, she took us to a fine room in which we found fourteen young women, all very handsome, and dressed alike in muslin. As we entered the room, they rose and made us a graceful reverence; they were all about the same age, some with light hair, some with dark; every taste could be satisfied. We passed them in review, addressing a few words to each, and made our choice. The two we chose screamed for joy, kissed us with a voluptuousness which a novice might have mistaken for love, and took us to the garden until dinner would be

ready. That garden was very large and artistically arranged to minister to the pleasures of love. Madame Paris said to us,—

"Go, gentlemen, enjoy the fresh air with perfect security in every way; my house is the temple of peace and of good health."

The girl I had chosen was something like Coraline, and that made me find her delightful. But in the midst of our amorous occupations we were called to dinner. We were well served, and the dinner had given us new strength, when our single-eyed hostess came, watch in hand, to announce that time was up. Pleasure at the "Hôtel du Roule" was measured by the hour.

I whispered to Patu, and, after a few philosophical considerations, addressing himself to *madame la gouvernante,* he said to her,—

"We will have a double dose, and of course pay double."

"You are quite welcome, gentlemen."

We went upstairs, and after we had made our choice a second time, we renewed our promenade in the garden. But once more we were disagreeably surprised by the strict punctuality of the lady of the house. "Indeed! this is too much of a good thing, madam."

"Let us go up for the third time, make a third choice, and pass the whole night here."

"A delightful idea which I accept with all my heart."

"Does Madame Paris approve our plan?"

"I could not have devised a better one, gentlemen; it is a masterpiece."

When we were in the room, and after we had made a new choice, the girls laughed at the first ones who had not contrived to captivate us, and by way of revenge these girls told their companions that we were lanky fellows.

This time I was indeed astonished at my own choice. I had taken a true Aspasia, and I thanked my stars that I had passed her by the first two times, as I had now the certainty of possessing her for fourteen hours. That beauty's name was Saint Hilaire; and under that name she became famous in England, where she followed a rich lord the year after. At first, vexed because I had not remarked her before, she was proud and disdainful; but I soon proved to her that it was fortunate that my first or second choice had not fallen on her, as she would now remain longer with me. She then began to laugh, and shewed herself very agreeable.

That girl had wit, education and talent—everything, in fact, that is needful to succeed in the profession she had adopted. During the supper Patu. told me in Italian that he was on the point of taking her at the very moment I chose her, and the next morning he informed me that he had slept quietly all night. The Saint Hilaire was highly pleased with me, and she boasted of it before her companions. She was the cause of my paying

several visits to the Hotel du Roule, and all for her; she was very proud of my constancy.

Those visits very naturally cooled my ardour for Coraline. A singer from Venice, called Guadani, handsome, a thorough musician, and very witty, contrived to captivate her affections three weeks after my quarrel with her. The handsome fellow, who was a man only in appearance, inflamed her with curiosity if not with love, and caused a rupture with the prince, who caught her in the very act. But Coraline managed to coax him back, and, a short time after, a reconciliation took place between them, and such a good one, that a babe was the consequence of it; a girl, whom the prince named Adelaide, and to whom he gave a dowry. After the death of his father, the Duke of Valentinois, the prince left her altogether and married Mlle. de Brignole, from Genoa. Coraline became the mistress of Count de la Marche, now Prince de Conti. Coraline is now dead, as well as a son whom she had by the count, and whom his father named Count de Monreal.

Madame la Dauphine was delivered of a princess, who received the title of Madame de France.

In the month of August the Royal Academy had an exhibition at the Louvre, and as there was not a single battle piece I conceived the idea of summoning my brother to Paris. He was then in Venice, and he had great talent in that particular style. Passorelli, the only painter of battles known

in France, was dead, and I thought that François might succeed and make a fortune. I therefore wrote to M. Grimani and to my brother; I persuaded them both, but François did not come to Paris till the beginning of the following year.

Louis XV., who was passionately fond of hunting, was in the habit of spending six weeks every year at the Château of Fontainebleau. He always returned to Versailles towards the middle of November. That trip cost him, or rather cost France, five millions of francs. He always took with him all that could contribute to the amusement of the foreign ambassadors and of his numerous court. He was followed by the French and the Italian comedians, and by the actors and actresses of the opera.

During those six weeks Fontainebleau was more brilliant than Versailles; nevertheless, the artists attached to the theatres were so numerous that the Opera, the French and Italian Comedies, remained open in Paris.

Baletti's father, who had recovered his health, was to go to Fontainebleau with Silvia and all his family. They invited me to accompany them, and to accept a lodging in a house hired by them.

It was a splendid opportunity; they were my friends, and I accepted, for I could not have met with a better occasion to see the court and all the foreign ministers. I presented myself to

M. de Morosini, now Procurator at St. Mark's, and then ambassador from the Republic to the French court.

The first night of the opera he gave me permission to accompany him; the music was by Lulli. I had a seat in the pit precisely under the private box of Madame de Pompadour, whom I did not know. During the first scene the celebrated Le Maur gave a scream so shrill and so unexpected that I thought she had gone mad. I burst into a genuine laugh, not supposing that any one could possibly find fault with it. But a knight of the Order of the Holy Ghost, who was near the Marquise de Pompadour, dryly asked me what country I came from. I answered, in the same tone,—

"From Venice."

"I have been there, and have laughed heartily at the recitative in your operas."

"I believe you, sir, and I feel certain that no one ever thought of objecting to your laughing."

My answer, rather a sharp one, made Madame de Pompadour laugh, and she asked me whether I truly came from down there.

"What do you mean by down there?"

"I mean Venice."

"Venice, madam, is not down there, but up there."

That answer was found more singular than the first, and everybody in the box held a consultation

in order to ascertain whether Venice was down or up. Most likely they thought I was right, for I was left alone. Nevertheless, I listened to the opera without laughing; but as I had a very bad cold I blew my nose often. The same gentleman addressing himself again to me, remarked that very likely the windows of my room did not close well. That gentleman, who was unknown to me was the Maréchal de Richelieu. I told him he was mistaken, for my windows were well *calfoutrées*. Everyone in the box burst into a loud laugh, and I felt mortified, for I knew my mistake; I ought to have said *calfeutrées*. But these *eus* and *ous* cause dire misery to all foreigners.

Half an hour afterwards M. de Richelieu asked me which of the two actresses pleased me most by her beauty.

"That one, sir."

"But she has ugly legs."

"They are not seen, sir; besides, whenever I examine the beauty of a woman, *la première chose que j'écarte, ce sont les jambes.*"

That word said quite by chance, and the double meaning of which I did not understand, made at once an important personage of me, and everybody in the box of Madame de Pompadour was curious to know me. The marshal learned who I was from M. de Morosini, who told me that the duke would be happy to receive me. My *jeu de mots* became celebrated, and the marshal

honoured me with a very gracious welcome. Among the foreign ministers, the one to whom I attached myself most was Lord Keith, Marshal of Scotland and ambassador of the King of Prussia. I shall have occasion to speak of him.

The day after my arrival in Fontainebleau I went alone to the court, and I saw Louis XV., the handsome king, go to the chapel with the royal family and all the ladies of the court, who surprised me by their ugliness as much as the ladies of the court of Turin had astonished me by their beauty. Yet in the midst of so many ugly ones I found out a regular beauty. I enquired who she was.

"She is," answered one of my neighbours, "Madame de Brionne, more remarkable by her virtue even than by her beauty. Not only is there no scandalous story told about her, but she has never given any opportunity to scandal-mongers of inventing any adventure of which she was the heroine."

"Perhaps her adventures are not known."

"Ah, monsieur! at the court everything is known."

I went about alone, sauntering through the apartments, when suddenly I met a dozen ugly ladies who seemed to be running rather than walking; they were standing so badly upon their legs that they appeared as if they would fall forward on their faces. Some gentleman happened to be

near me, curiosity impelled me to enquire where they were coming from, and where they were going in such haste.

"They are coming from the apartment of the queen who is going to dine, and the reason why they walk so badly is that their shoes have heels six inches high, which compel them to walk on their toes and with bent knees in order to avoid falling on their faces."

"But why do they not wear lower heels?"

"It is the fashion."

"What a stupid fashion!"

I took a gallery at random, and saw the king passing along, leaning with one arm on the shoulder of M. d'Argenson. "Oh, base servility!" I thought to myself. "How can a man make up his mind thus to bear the yoke, and how can a man believe himself so much above all others as to take such unwarrantable liberties!"

Louis XV. had the most magnificent head it was possible to see, and he carried it with as much grace as majesty. Never did even the most skilful painter succeed in rendering justice to the expression of that beautiful head, when the king turned it on one side to look with kindness at anyone. His beauty and grace compelled love at once. As I saw him, I thought I had found the ideal majesty which I had been so surprised not to find in the king of Sardinia, and I could not entertain a doubt of Madame de Pompadour having been in love with

the king when she sued for his royal attention. I was greatly mistaken, perhaps, but such a thought was natural in looking at the countenance of Louis XV.

I reached a splendid room in which I saw several courtiers walking about, and a table large enough for twelve persons, but laid out only for one.

"For whom is this table?"

"For the queen. Her majesty is now coming in."

It was the queen of France, without rouge, and very simply dressed; her head was covered with a large cap; she looked old and devout. When she was near the table, she graciously thanked two nuns who were placing a plate with fresh butter on it. She sat down, and immediately the courtiers formed a semicircle within five yards of the table; I remained near them, imitating their respectful silence.

Her majesty began to eat without looking at anyone, keeping her eyes on her plate. One of the dishes being to her taste, she desired to be helped to it a second time, and she then cast her eyes round the circle of courtiers, probably in order to see if among them there was anyone to whom she owed an account of her daintiness. She found that person, I suppose, for she said,——

"Monsieur de Lowendal!"

At that name, a fine-looking man came forward with a respectful inclination, and said,——

"Your majesty?"

"I believe this is a fricassee of chickens."

"I am of the same opinion, madam."

After this answer, given in the most serious tone, the queen continued eating, and the marshal retreated backward to his original place. The queen finished her dinner without uttering a single word, and retired to her apartments the same way as she had come. I thought that if such was the way the queen of France took all her meals, I would not sue for the honour of being her guest.

I was delighted to have seen the famous captain who had conquered Bergen-op-Zoom, but I regretted that such a man should be compelled to give an answer about a fricassee of chickens in the serious tone of a judge pronouncing a sentence of death.

I made good use of this anecdote at the excellent dinner Silvia gave to the *élite* of polite and agreeable society.

A few days afterwards, as I was forming a line with a crowd of courtiers to enjoy the ever new pleasure of seeing the king go to mass, a pleasure to which must be added the advantage of looking at the naked and entirely exposed arms and bosoms of Mesdames de France, his daughters, I suddenly perceived the Cavamacchia, whom I had left in Cesena under the name of Madame Querini. If I was astonished to see her, she was as much so in meeting me in such a place. The

Marquis of Saint Simon, *premier gentilhomme* of the Prince de Condé, escorted her.

"Madame Querini in Fontainebleau?"

"You here? It reminds me of Queen Elizabeth saying,——

"'*Pauper ubique jacet.*'"

"An excellent comparison, madam."

"I am only joking, my dear friend; I am here to see the king, who does not know me; but to-morrow the ambassador will present me to his majesty."

She placed herself in the line within a yard or two from me, beside the door by which the king was to come. His majesty entered the gallery with M. de Richelieu, and looked at the so-called Madame Querini. But she very likely did not take his fancy, for, continuing to walk on, he addressed to the marshal these remarkable words, which Juliette must have overheard,——

"We have handsomer women here."

In the afternoon I called upon the Venetian ambassador. I found him in numerous company, with Madame Querini sitting on his right. She addressed me in the most flattering and friendly manner; it was extraordinary conduct on the part of a giddy woman who had no cause to like me, for she was aware that I knew her thoroughly, and that I had mastered her vanity; but as I understood her manœuvring I made up my mind not to disoblige her, and even to render her all the

good offices I could; it was a noble revenge.

As she was speaking of M. Querini, the ambassador congratulated her upon her marriage with him, saying that he was glad M. Querini had rendered justice to her merit, and adding,——

"I was not aware of your marriage."

"Yet it took place more than two years since," said Juliette.

"I know it for a fact," I said, in my turn; "for, two years ago, the lady was introduced as Madame Querini and with the title of excellency by General Spada to all the nobility in Cesena, where I was at that time."

"I have no doubt of it," answered the ambassador, fixing his eyes upon me, "for Querini has himself written to me on the subject."

A few minutes afterwards, as I was preparing to take my leave, the ambassador, under pretence of some letters the contents of which he wished to communicate to me, invited me to come into his private room, and he asked me what people generally thought of the marriage in Venice.

"Nobody knows it, and it is even rumoured that the heir of the house of Querini is on the point of marrying a daughter of the Grimani family; but I shall certainly send the news to Venice."

"What news?"

"That Juliette is truly Madame Querini, since

your excellency will present her as such to Louis XV."

"Who told you so?"

"She did."

"Perhaps she has altered her mind."

I repeated to the ambassador the words which the king had said to M. de Richelieu after looking at Juliette.

"Then I can guess," remarked the ambassador, "why Juliette does not wish to be presented to the king."

I was informed some time afterwards that M. de Saint Quentin, the king's confidential minister, had called after mass on the handsome Venetian, and had told her that the king of France had most certainly very bad taste, because he had not thought her beauty superior to that of several ladies of his court. Juliette left Fontainebleau the next morning.

In the first part of my Memoirs I have spoken of Juliette's beauty; she had a wonderful charm in her countenance, but she had already used her advantages too long, and her beauty was beginning to fade when she arrived in Fontainebleau.

I met her again in Paris at the ambassador's, and she told me with a laugh that she had only been in jest when she called herself Madame Querini, and that I should oblige her if for the future I would call her by her real name of Countess Preati. She invited me to visit her at

the Hotel de Luxembourg, where she was staying. I often called on her, for her intrigues amused me, but I was wise enough not to meddle with them.

She remained in Paris four months, and contrived to infatuate M. Zanchi, secretary of the Venetian Embassy, an amiable and learned man. He was so deeply in love that he had made up his mind to marry her; but through a caprice which she, perhaps, regretted afterwards, she ill-treated him, and the fool died of grief. Count de Kaunitz, ambassador of Maria Theresa, had some inclination for her, as well as the Count of Zinzendorf. The person who arranged these transient and short-lived intrigues was a certain Guasco, an abbé not over-favoured with the gifts of Plutus. He was particularly ugly, and had to purchase small favours with great services.

But the man whom she really wished to marry was Count Saint Simon. He would have married her if she had not given him false addresses to make enquiries respecting her birth. The Preati family of Verona denied all knowledge of her, as a matter of course, and M. de Saint Simon, who, in spite of all his love, had not entirely lost his senses, had the courage to abandon her. Altogether, Paris did not prove an *el dorado* for my handsome countrywoman, for she was obliged to pledge her diamonds, and to leave them behind her. After her return to Venice she married the son of the Uccelli, who sixteen years before had

taken her out of her poverty. She died ten years ago.

I was still taking my French lessons with my good old Crébillon; yet my style, which was full of Italianisms, often expressed the very reverse of what I meant to say. But generally my *quid pro quos* only resulted in curious jokes which made my fortune; and the best of it is that my gibberish did me no harm on the score of wit: on the contrary, it procured me fine acquaintances.

Several ladies of the best society begged me to teach them Italian, saying that it would afford them the opportunity of teaching me French; in such an exchange I always won more than they did.

Madame Préodot, who was one of my pupils, received me one morning; she was still in bed, and told me that she did not feel disposed to have a lesson, because she had taken medicine the night previous. Foolishly translating an Italian idiom, I asked her, with an air of deep interest, whether she had well déchargé?

"Sir, what a question! You are unbearable."

I repeated my question; she broke out angrily again.

"Never utter that dreadful word."

"You are wrong in getting angry; it is the proper word."

"A very dirty word, sir, but enough about it. Will you have some breakfast?"

"No, I thank you. I have taken a *café* and two *Savoyards.*"

"Dear me! What a ferocious breakfast! Pray, explain yourself."

"I say that I have drunk a *café* and eaten two *Savoyards* soaked in it, and that is what I do every morning."

"You are stupid, my good friend. A *café* is the establishment in which coffee is sold, and you ought to say that you have drunk *une tasse de café.*"

"Good indeed! Do you drink the cup? In Italy we say a *caffe,* and we are not foolish enough to suppose that it means the coffee-house."

"He will have the best of it! And the two *Savoyards,* how did you swallow them?"

"Soaked in my coffee, for they were not larger than these on your table."

"And you call these *Savoyards?* Say biscuits."

"In Italy, we call them *Savoyards* because they were first invented in Savoy; and it is not my fault if you imagined that I had swallowed two of the porters to be found at the corner of the streets—big fellows whom you call in Paris *Savoyards,* although very often they have never been in Savoy."

Her husband came in at that moment, and she lost no time in relating the whole of our conversation. He laughed heartily, but he said I was right. Her niece arrived a few minutes after; she was a young girl about fourteen years of age, reserved, modest, and very intelligent. I had given her five

or six lessons in Italian, and as she was very fond of that language and studied diligently she was beginning to speak.

Wishing to pay me her compliments in Italian, she said to me,——

"*Signore, sono incantata di vi vedere in buona salute.*"

"I thank you, mademoiselle; but to translate *I am enchanted,* you must say *ho piacere,* and for *to see you,* you must say *di vedervi.*"

"I thought, sir, that the *vi* was to be placed before."

"No, mademoiselle, we always put it *behind.*"

Monsieur and Madame Préodot were dying with laughter; the young lady was confused, and I in despair at having uttered such a gross absurdity; but it could not be helped. I took a book sulkily, in the hope of putting a stop to their mirth, but it was of no use: it lasted a week. That uncouth blunder soon got known throughout Paris, and gave me a sort of reputation which I lost little by little, but only when I understood the double meanings of words better. Crébillon was much amused with my blunder, and he told me that I ought to have said *after* instead of *behind.* Ah! why have not all languages the same genius! But if the French laughed at my mistakes in speaking their language, I took my revenge amply by turning some of their idioms into ridicule.

"Sir," I once said to a gentleman, "how is your wife?"

"You do her great honour, sir."

"Pray tell me, sir, what her honour has to do with her health?"

I meet in the Bois de Boulogne a young man riding a horse which he cannot master, and at last he is thrown. I stop the horse, run to the assistance of the young man and help him up.

"Did you hurt yourself, sir?"

"Oh, many thanks, sir, *au contraire.*"

"Why *au contraire!* The deuce! It has done you good? Then begin again, sir."

And a thousand similar expressions entirely the reverse of good sense. But it is the genius of the language.

I was one day paying my first visit to the wife of President de N——, when her nephew, a brilliant butterfly, came in, and she introduced me to him, mentioning my name and my country.

"Indeed, sir, you are Italian?" said the young man. "Upon my word, you present yourself so gracefully that I would have betted you were French."

"Sir, when I saw you, I was near making the same mistake; I would have betted you were Italian."

Another time, I was dining at Lady Lambert's in numerous and brilliant company. Someone remarked on my finger a cornelian ring on which was

engraved very beautifully the head of Louis XV. My ring went round the table, and everybody thought that the likeness was striking.

A young marquise, who had the reputation of being a great wit, said to me in the most serious tone,——

"It is truly an antique?"

"The stone, madam, undoubtedly."

Everyone laughed except the thoughtless young beauty, who did not take any notice of it. Towards the end of the dinner, someone spoke of the rhinoceros, which was then shewn for twenty-four sous at the St. Germain's Fair.

"Let us go and see it!" was the cry.

We got into the carriages, and reached the fair. We took several turns before we could find the place. I was the only gentleman; I was taking care of two ladies in the midst of the crowd, and the witty marquise was walking in front of us. At the end of the alley where we had been told that we would find the animal, there was a man placed to receive the money of the visitors. It is true that the man, dressed in the African fashion, was very dark and enormously stout, yet he had a human and very masculine form, and the beautiful marquise had no business to make a mistake. Nevertheless, the thoughtless young creature went up straight to him and said,——

"Are you the rhinoceros, sir?"

"Go in, madam, go in."

We were dying with laughing; and the marquise, when she had seen the animal, thought herself bound to apologize to the master; assuring him that she had never seen a rhinoceros in her life, and therefore he could not feel offended if she had made a mistake.

One evening I was in the *foyer* of the Italian Comedy, where between the acts the highest noblemen were in the habit of coming, in order to converse and joke with the actresses who used to sit there waiting for their turn to appear on the stage, and I was seated near Camille, Coraline's sister, whom I amused by making love to her. A young councillor, who objected to my occupying Camille's attention, being a very conceited fellow, attacked me upon some remark I made respecting an Italian play, and took the liberty of shewing his bad temper by criticizing my native country. I was answering him in an indirect way, looking all the time at Camille, who was laughing. Everybody had congregated around us and was attentive to the discussion, which, being carried on as an assault of wit, had nothing to make it unpleasant. But it seemed to take a serious turn when the young fop, turning the conversation on the police of the city, said that for some time it had been dangerous to walk alone at night through the streets of Paris.

"During the last month," he added, "the

Place de Grève has seen the hanging of seven men, among whom there were five Italians. An extraordinary circumstance."

"Nothing extraordinary in that," I answered; "honest men generally contrive to be hung far away from their native country; and as a proof of it, sixty Frenchmen have been hung in the course of last year between Naples, Rome, and Venice. Five times twelve are sixty; so you see that it is only a fair exchange."

The laughter was all on my side, and the fine councillor went away rather crestfallen. One of the gentlement present at the discussion, finding my answer to his taste, came up to Camille, and asked her in a whisper who I was. We got acquainted at once.

It was M. de Marigni, whom I was delighted to know for the sake of my brother whose arrival in Paris I was expecting every day. M. de Marigni was superintendent of the royal buildings, and the Academy of Painting was under his jurisdiction. I mentioned my brother to him, and he graciously promised to protect him. Another young nobleman, who conversed with me, invited me to visit him. It was the Duke de Matalona.

I told him that I had seen him, then only a child, eight years before in Naples, and that I was under great obligations to his uncle, Don Lelio. The young duke was delighted, and we became intimate friends.

My brother arrived in Paris in the spring of 1751, and he lodged with me at Madame Quinson's. He began at once to work with success for private individuals; but his main idea being to compose a picture to be submitted to the judgment of the Academy, I introduced him to M. de Marigni, who received him with great distinction, and encouraged him by assuring him of his protection. He immediately set to work with great diligence.

M. de Morosini had been recalled, and M. de Mocenigo had succeeded him as ambassador of the Republic. M. de Bragadin had recommended me to him, and he tendered a friendly welcome both to me and to my brother, in whose favour he felt interested as a Venetian, and as a young artist seeking to build up a position by his talent.

M. de Mocenigo was of a very pleasant nature; he liked gambling although he was always unlucky at cards; he loved women, and he was not more fortunate with them because he did not know how to manage them. Two years after his arrival in Paris he fell in love with Madame de Colande, and, finding it impossible to win her affections, he killed himself.

Madame la Dauphine was delivered of a prince, the Duke of Burgundy, and the rejoicings indulged in at the birth of that child seem to me incredible now, when I see what the same nation is doing against the king. The people want to be free; it is a noble ambition, for mankind are not made to be

the slaves of one man; but with a nation populous, great, witty, and giddy, what will be the end of that revolution? Time alone can tell us.

The Duke de Matalona procured me the acquaintance of the two princes, Don Marc Antoine and Don Jean Baptiste Borghese, from Rome, who were enjoying themselves in Paris, yet living without display. I had occasion to remark that when those Roman princes were presented at the court of France they were only styled "marquis." It was the same with the Russian princes, to whom the title of prince was refused when they wanted to be presented; they were called *"knees,"* but they did not mind it, because that word meant prince. The court of France has always been foolishly particular on the question of titles, and is even now sparing of the title of *monsieur,* although it is common enough everywhere: every man who was not titled was called *Sieur.* I have remarked that the king never addressed his bishops otherwise than as abbés, although they were generally very proud of their titles. The king likewise affected to know a nobleman only when his name was inscribed amongst those who served him.

Yet the haughtiness of Louis XV. had been innoculated into him by education; it was not in his nature. When an ambassador presented someone to him, the person thus presented withdrew with the certainty of having been seen by the king, but that was all. Nevertheless, Louis XV. was very

polite, particularly with ladies, even with his mistresses, when in public. Whoever failed in respect towards them in the slightest manner was sure of disgrace, and no king ever possessed to a greater extent the grand royal virtue which is called dissimulation. He kept a secret faithfully, and he was delighted when he knew that no one but himself possessed it.

The Chevalier d'Eon is a proof of this, for the king alone knew and had always known that the chevalier was a woman, and all the long discussions which the false chevalier had with the office for foreign affairs was a comedy which the king allowed to go on, only because it amused him.

Louis XV. was great in all things, and he would have had no faults if flattery had not forced them upon him. But how could he possibly have supposed himself faulty in anything when everyone around him repeated constantly that he was the best of kings? A king, in the opinion of which he was imbued respecting his own person, was a being of a nature by far too superior to ordinary men for him not to have the right to consider himself akin to a god. Sad destiny of kings! Vile flatterers are constantly doing everything necessary to reduce them below the condition of man.

The Princess of Ardore was delivered about that time of a young prince. Her husband, the Neapolitan ambassador, entreated Louis XV. to be god-father to the child; the king consented and

presented his god-son with a regiment; but the mother, who did not like the military career for her son, refused it. The Marshal de Richelieu told me that he had never known the king laugh so heartily as when he heard of that singular refusal.

At the Duchess de Fulvie's I made the acquaintance of Mdlle. Gaussin, who was called *Lolotte*. She was the mistress of Lord Albemarle, the English ambassador, a witty and very generous nobleman. One evening he complained of his mistress praising the beauty of the stars which were shining brightly over her head, saying that she ought to know he could not give them to her. If Lord Albemarle had been ambassador to the court of France at the time of the rupture between France and England, he would have arranged all difficulties amicably, and the unfortunate war by which France lost Canada would not have taken place. There is no doubt that the harmony between two nations depends very often upon their respective ambassadors, when there is any danger of a rupture.

As to the noble lord's mistress, there was but one opinion respecting her. She was fit in every way to become his wife, and the highest families of France did not think that she needed the title of Lady Albemarle to be received with distinction; no lady considered it debasing to sit near her, although she was well known as the mistress of the English lord. She had passed from her mother's

arms to those of Lord Albemarle at the age of thirteen, and her conduct was always of the highest respectability. She bore children whom the ambassador acknowledged legally, and she died Countess d'Erouville. I shall have to mention her again in my Memoirs.

I had likewise occasion to become acquainted at the Venetian Embassy with a lady from Venice, the widow of an English baronet named Wynne. She was then coming from London with her children, where she had been compelled to go in order to insure them the inheritance of their late father, which they would have lost if they had not declared themselves members of the Church of England. She was on her way back to Venice, much pleased with her journey. She was accompanied by her eldest daughter—a young girl of twelve years, who, notwithstanding her youth, carried on her beautiful face all the signs of perfection.

She is now living in Venice, the widow of Count de Rosenberg, who died in Venice ambassador of the Empress-Queen Maria Theresa. She is surrounded by the brilliant halo of her excellent conduct and of all her social virtues. No one can accuse her of any fault, except that of being poor, but she feels it only because it does not allow her to be as charitable as she might wish.

The reader will see in the next chapter how I managed to embroil myself with the French police.

CHAPTER VIII

MY BROIL WITH PARISIAN JUSTICE—MDLLE. VESIAN

The youngest daughter of my landlady, Mdlle. Quinson, a young girl between fifteen and sixteen years of age, was in the habit of often coming to my room without being called. It was not long before I discovered that she was in love with me, and I should have thought myself ridiculous if I had been cruel to a young *brunette* who was piquant, lively, amiable, and had a most delightful voice.

During the first four or five months nothing but childish trifles took place between us; but one night, coming home very late and finding her fast asleep on my bed, I did not see the necessity of waking her up, and undressing myself I lay down beside her. . . . She left me at day-break.

Mimi had not been gone three hours when a milliner came with a charming young girl, to invite herself and her friend to breakfast; I thought the young girl well worth a breakfast, but I was tired and wanted rest, and I begged them both to withdraw. Soon after they had left me, Madame

Quinson came with her daughter to make my bed. I put my dressing-gown on, and began to write.

"Ah! the nasty hussies!" exclaims the mother.

"What is the matter, madam?"

"The riddle is clear enough, sir; these sheets are spoiled."

"I am very sorry, my dear madam, but change them, and the evil will be remedied at once."

She went out of the room, threatening and grumbling,——

"Let them come again, and see if I don't take care of them!"

Mimi remained alone with me, and I addressed her some reproaches for her imprudence. But she laughed, and answered that Love had sent those women on purpose to protect Innocence! After that, Mimi was no longer under any restraint, she would come and share my bed whenever she had a fancy to do so, unless I sent her back to her own room, and in the morning she always left me in good time. But at the end of four months my beauty informed me that our secret would soon be discovered.

"I am very sorry," I said to her, "but I cannot help it."

"We ought to think of something."

"Well, do so."

"What can I think of? Well, come what will; the best thing I can do is not to think of it."

Towards the sixth month she had become so large, that her mother, no longer doubting the truth, got into a violent passion, and by dint of blows compelled her to name the father. Mimi said I was the guilty swain, and perhaps it was not an untruth.

With that great discovery Madame Quinson burst into my room in high dudgeon. She threw herself on a chair, and when she had recovered her breath she loaded me with insulting words, and ended by telling me that I must marry her daughter. At this intimation, understanding her object and wishing to cut the matter short, I told her that I was already married in Italy.

"Then why did you come here and get my daughter with child?"

"I can assure you that I did not mean to do so. Besides, how do you know that I am the father of the child?"

"Mimi says so, and she is certain of it."

"I congratulate her; but I warn you, madam, that I am ready to swear that I have not any certainty about it."

"What then?"

"Then nothing. If she is pregnant, she will be confined."

She went downstairs, uttering curses and threats: the next day I was summoned before the commissary of the district. I obeyed the summons, and found Madame Quinson fully

equipped for the battle. The commissary, after the preliminary questions usual in all legal cases, asked me whether I admitted myself guilty towards the girl Quinson of the injury of which the mother, there present personally, complained.

"*Monsieur le Commissaire,* I beg of you to write word by word the answer which I am going to give you."

"Very well."

"I have caused no injury whatever to Mimi, the plaintiff's daughter, and I refer you to the girl herself, who has always had as much friendship for me as I have had for her."

"But she declares that she is pregnant from your doings."

"That may be, but it is not certain."

"She says it is certain, and she swears that she has never known any other man."

"If it is so, she is unfortunate; for in such a question a man cannot trust any woman but his own wife."

"What did you give her in order to seduce her?"

"Nothing; for very far from having seduced her, she has seduced me, and we agreed perfectly in one moment; a pretty woman does not find it very hard to seduce me."

"Was she a virgin?"

"I never felt any curiosity about it either before or after; therefore, sir, I do not know."

"Her mother claims reparation, and the law is against you."

"I can give no reparation to the mother; and as for the law I will obey it when it has been explained to me, and when I am convinced that I have been guilty against it."

"You are already convinced. Do you imagine that a man who gets an honest girl with child in a house of which he is an inmate does not transgress the laws of society?"

"I admit that to be the case when the mother is deceived; but when that same mother sends her daughter to the room of a young man, are we not right in supposing that she is disposed to accept peacefully all the accidents which may result from such conduct?"

"She sent her daughter to your room only to wait on you."

"And she has waited on me as I have waited on her: if she sends her to my room this evening, and if it is agreeable to Mimi, I will certainly serve her as well as I can; but I will have nothing to do with her against her will or out of my room, the rent of which I have always paid punctually."

"You may say what you like, but you must pay the fine."

"I will say what I believe to be just, and I will pay nothing: for there can be no fine where there is no law transgressed. If I am sentenced to pay I shall appeal even to the last jurisdiction and

until I obtain justice, for believe me, sir, I know that I am not such an awkward and cowardly fellow as to refuse my caresses to a pretty woman who pleases me, and comes to provoke them in my own room, especially when I feel myself certain of the mother's agreement."

I signed the interrogatory after I had read it carefully, and went away. The next day the lieutenant of police sent for me, and after he had heard me, as well as the mother and the daughter, he acquitted me and condemned Madame Quinson in costs. But I could not after all resist the tears of Mimi, and her entreaties for me to defray the expenses of her confinement. She was delivered of a boy, who was sent to the Hôtel Dieu to be brought up at the nation's expense. Soon afterwards Mimi ran away from her mother's house, and she appeared on the stage at St. Laurent's Fair. Being unknown, she had no difficulty in finding a lover who took her for a maiden. I found her very pretty on the stage.

"I did not know," I said to her, "that you were a musician."

"I am a musician about as much as all my companions, not one of whom knows a note of music. The girls at the opera are not much more clever, and in spite of that, with a good voice and some taste, one can sing delightfully."

I advised her to invite Patu to supper, and he was charmed with her. Some time afterwards,

however, she came to a bad end, and disappeared.

The Italian comedians obtained at that time permission to perform parodies of operas and of tragedies. I made the acquaintance at that theatre of the celebrated Chantilly, who had been the mistress of the Marechal de Saxe, and was called Favart because the poet of that name had married her. She sang in the parody of *Thétis et Pelée,* by M. de Fontelle, the part of *Tonton,* amidst deafening applause. Her grace and talent won the love of a man of the greatest merit, the Abbé de Voisenon, with whom I was as intimate as with Crébillon. All the plays performed at the Italian Comedy, under the name of Madame Favart, were written by the abbé, who became member of the Académie after my departure from Paris. I cultivated an acquaintance the value of which I could appreciate, and he honoured me with his friendship. It was at my suggestions that the Abbé de Voisenon conceived the idea of composing oratorios in poetry; they were sung for the first time at the Tuileries, when the theatres were closed in consequence of some religious festival. That amiable abbé, who had written several comedies in secret, had very poor health and a very small body; he was all wit and gracefulness, famous for his shrewd repartees which, although very cutting, never offended anyone. It was impossible for him to have any enemies, for his criticism only grazed the skin and never wounded deeply. One day, as he was re-

turning from Versailles, I asked him the news of the court.

"The king is yawning," he answered, "because he must come to the parliament to-morrow to hold a bed of justice."

"Why is it called a bed of justice?"

"I do not know, unless it is because justice is asleep during the proceedings."

I afterwards met in Prague the living portrait of that eminent writer in Count François Hardig, now plenipotentiary of the emperor at the court of Saxony.

The Abbé de Voisenon introduced me to Fontenelle, who was then ninety-three years of age. A fine wit, an amiable and learned man, celebrated for his quick repartees, Fontenelle could not pay a compliment without throwing kindness and wit into it. I told him that I had come from Italy on purpose to see him.

"Confess, sir," he said to me, "that you have kept me waiting a very long time."

This repartee was obliging and critical at the same time, and pointed out in a delicate and witty manner the untruth of my compliment. He made me a present of his works, and asked me if I liked the French plays; I told him that I had seen *Thétis et Pelée* at the opera. That play was his own composition, and when I had praised it, he told me that it was a *tête pelée.*

"I was at the Théâtre Français last night," I said, "and saw *Athalie.*"

"It is the masterpiece of Racine; Voltaire has been wrong in accusing me of having criticized that tragedy, and in attributing to me an epigram, the author of which has never been known, and which ends with two very poor lines:

Pour avoir fait pis qu'Esther,
Comment diable as-tu pu faire "

I have been told that M. de Fontenelle had been the tender friend of Madame du Tencin, that M. d'Alembert was the offspring of their intimacy, and that Le Rond had only been his foster-father. I knew d'Alembert at Madame de Graffigny's. That great philosopher had the talent of never appearing to be a learned man when he was in the company of amiable persons who had no pretension to learning or the sciences, and he always seemed to endow with intelligence those who conversed with him.

When I went to Paris for the second time, after my escape from The Leads of Venice, I was delighted at the idea of seeing again the amiable, venerable Fontenelle, but he died a fortnight after my arrival, at the beginning of the year 1757.

When I paid my third visit to Paris with the intention of ending my days in that capital, I reckoned upon the friendship of M. d'Alembert, but he died, like Fontenelle, a fortnight after my arrival, towards the end of 1783. Now I feel that I have seen Paris and France for the last time.

The popular effervescence has disgusted me, and I am too old to hope to see the end of it.

Count de Looz, Polish ambassador at the French court, invited me in 1751 to translate into Italian a French opera susceptible of great transformations, and of having a grand ballet annexed to the subject of the opera itself. I chose *Zoroastre,* by M. de Cahusac. I had to adapt words to the music of the choruses, always a difficult task. The music remained very beautiful, of course, but my Italian poetry was very poor. In spite of that the generous sovereign sent me a splendid gold snuff-box, and I thus contrived at the same time to please my mother very highly.

It was about that time that Mdlle. Vesian arrived in Paris with her brother. She was quite young, well educated, beautiful, most amiable, and a novice; her brother accompanied her. Her father, formerly an officer in the French army, had died at Parma, his native city. Left an orphan without any means of support, she followed the advice given by her friends; she sold the furniture left by her father, with the intention of going to Versailles to obtain from the justice and from the generosity of the king a small pension to enable her to live. As she got out of the diligence, she took a coach, and desired to be taken to some hotel close by the Italian Theatre; by the greatest chance she was brought to the Hotel de Bourgogne, where I was then staying myself.

In the morning I was told that there were two young Italians, brother and sister, who did not appear very wealthy, in the next room to mine. Italians, young, poor and newly arrived, my curiosity was excited. I went to the door of their room, I knocked, and a young man came to open it in his shirt.

"I beg you to excuse me, sir," he said to me, "if I receive you in such a state."

"I have to ask your pardon myself. I only come to offer you my services, as a countryman and as a neighbour."

A mattress on the floor told me where the young man had slept; a bed standing in a recess and hid by curtains made me guess where the sister was. I begged of her to excuse me if I had presented myself without enquiring whether she was up.

She answered without seeing me, that the journey having greatly tried her she had slept a little later than usual, but that she would get up immediately if I would excuse her for a short time.

"I am going to my room, mademoiselle, and I will come back when you send for me; my room is next door to your own."

A quarter of an hour after, instead of being sent for, I saw a young and beautiful person enter my room; she made a modest bow, saying that she had come herself to return my visit, and that her brother would follow her immediately.

I thanked her for her visit, begged her to be seated, and I expressed all the interest I felt for her. Her gratitude shewed itself more by the tone of her voice than by her words, and her confidence being already captivated she told me artlessly, but not without some dignity, her short history or rather her situation, and she concluded by these words:

"I must in the course of the day find a less expensive lodging, for I only possess six francs."

I asked her whether she had any letters of recommendation, and she drew out of her pocket a parcel of papers containing seven or eight testimonials of good conduct and honesty, and a passport.

"Is this all you have, my dear countrywoman?"

"Yes. I intend to call with my brother upon the secretary of war, and I hope he will take pity on me."

"You do not know anybody here?"

"Not one person, sir; you are the first man in France to whom I have exposed my situation."

"I am a countryman of yours, and you are recommended to me by your position as well as by our age; I wish to be our adviser, if you will permit me."

"Ah, sir! how grateful I would be!"

"Do not mention it. Give me our papers, I will see what is to be done with them. Do not

relate your history to anyone, and do not say one word about your position. You had better remain at this hotel. Here are two louis which I will lend you until you are in a position to return them to me."

She accepted, expressing her heart-felt gratitude.

Mademoiselle Vesian was an interesting brunette of sixteen. She had a good knowledge of French and Italian, graceful manners, and a dignity which endowed her with a very noble appearance. She informed me of her affairs without meanness, yet without that timidity which seems to arise from a fear of the person who listens being disposed to take advantage of the distressing position confided to his honour. She seemed neither humiliated nor bold; she had hope, and she did not boast of her courage. Her virtue was by no means ostentatious, but there was in her an air of modesty which would certainly have put a restraint upon anyone disposed to fail in respect towards her. I felt the effect of it myself, for in spite of her beautiful eyes, her fine figure, of the freshness of her complexion, her transparent skin, her *negligée*—in one word, all that can tempt a man and which filled me with burning desires, I did not for one instant lose control over myself; she had inspired me with a feeling of respect which helped me to master my senses, and I promised myself not only to attempt

nothing against her virtue, but also not to be the first man to make her deviate from the right path. I even thought it better to postpone to another interview a little speech on that subject, the result of which might be to make me follow a different course.

"You are now in a city," I said to her, "in which your destiny must unfold itself, and in which all the fine qualities which nature has so bountifully bestowed upon you, and which may ultimately cause your fortune, may likewise cause your ruin; for here, my dear countrywoman, wealthy men despise all libertine women except those who have offered them the sacrifice of their virtue. If you are virtuous, and are determined upon remaining so, prepare yourself to bear a great deal of misery; if you feel yourself sufficiently above what is called prejudice, if, in one word, you feel disposed to consent to everything, in order to secure a comfortable position, be very careful not to make a mistake. Distrust altogether the sweet words which every passionate man will address to you for the sake of obtaining your favours, for, his passion once satisfied, his ardour will cool down, and you will find yourself deceived. Be wary of your adorers; they will give you abundance of counterfeit coin, but do not trust them far. As far as I am concerned, I feel certain that I shall never injure you, and I hope to be of some use to you. To reassure you entirely on my account, I will

treat you as if you were my sister, for I am too young to play the part of your father, and I would not tell you all this if I did not think you a very charming person."

Her brother joined us as we were talking together. He was a good-looking young man of eighteen, well made, but without any style about him; he spoke little, and his expression was devoid of individuality. We breakfasted together, and having asked him as we were at table for what profession he felt an inclination, he answered that he was disposed to do anything to earn an honourable living.

"Have you any peculiar talent?"

"I write pretty well."

"That is something. When you go out, mistrust everybody; do not enter any *café,* and never speak to anyone in the streets. Eat your meals in your room with our sister, and tell the landlady to give you a small closet to sleep in. Write something in French to-day, let me have it to-morrow morning, and we will see what can be done. As for you, mademoiselle, my books are at your disposal, I have your papers; to-morrow I may have some news to tell you; we shall not see each other again to-day, for I generally come home very late."

She took a few books, made a modest reverence, and told me with a charming voice that she had every confidence in me.

Feeling disposed to be useful to her, wherever I went during that day I spoke of nothing but of her and of her affairs; and everywhere men and women told me that if she was pretty she could not fail, but that at all events it would be right for her to take all necessary steps. I received a promise that the brother should be employed in some office. I thought that the best plan would be to find some influential lady who would consent to present Mdlle. Vesian to M. d'Argenson, and I knew that in the mean time I could support her. I begged Silvia to mention the matter to Madame de Montconseil, who had very great influence with the secretary of war. She promised to do so, but she wished to be acquainted with the young girl.

I returned to the hotel towards eleven o'clock, and seeing that there was a light still burning in the room of Mdlle. Vesian I knocked at her door. She opened it, and told me that she had sat up in the hope of seeing me. I gave her an account of what I had done. I found her disposed to undertake all that was necessary, and most grateful for my assistance. She spoke of her position with an air of noble indifference which she assumed in order to restrain her tears; she succeeded in keeping them back, but the moisture in her eyes proved all the efforts she was making to prevent them from falling. We had talked for two hours, and going from one subject to another I learned that she had never loved, and that she was there-

fore worthy of a lover who would reward her in a proper manner for the sacrifice of her virtue. It would have been absurd to think that marriage was to be the reward of that sacrifice; the young girl had not yet made what is called a false step, but she had none of the prudish feelings of those girls who say that they would not take such a step for all the gold in the universe, and usually give way before the slightest attack; all my young friend wanted was to dispose of herself in a proper and advantageous manner.

I could not help sighing as I listened to her very sensible remarks, considering the position in which she was placed by an adverse destiny. Her sincerity was charming to me; I was burning with desire. Lucie of Paséan came back to my memory; I recollected how deeply I had repented the injury I had done in neglecting a sweet flower, which another man, and a less worthy one, had hastened to pluck; I felt myself near a lamb which would perhaps become the prey of some greedy wolf; and she, with her noble feelings, her careful education, and a candour which an impure breath would perhaps destroy for ever, was surely not destined for a lot of shame. I regretted I was not rich enough to make her fortune, and to save her honour and her virtue. I felt that I could neither make her mine in an illegitimate way nor be her guardian angel, and that by becoming her protector I should do her more harm than good; in

one word, instead of helping her out of the unfortunate position in which she was, I should, perhaps, only contribute to her entire ruin. During that time I had her near me, speaking to her in a sentimental way, and not uttering one single word of love; but I kissed her hand and her arms too often without coming to a resolution, without beginning a thing which would have too rapidly come to an end, and which would have compelled me to keep her for myself; in that case, there would have been no longer any hope of a fortune for her, and for me no means of getting rid of her. I have loved women even to madness, but I have always loved liberty better; and whenever I have been in danger of losing it fate has come to my rescue.

I had remained about four hours with Mdlle. Vesian, consumed by the most intense desires, and I had had strength enough to conquer them. She could not attribute my reserve to a feeling of modesty, and not knowing why I did not shew more boldness she must have supposed that I was either ill or impotent. I left her, after inviting her to dinner for the next day.

We had a pleasant dinner, and her brother having gone out for a walk after our meal we looked together out of the window from which we could see all the carriages going to the Italian Comedy. I asked her whether she would like to go; she answered me with a smile of delight, and we started at once.

I placed her in the amphitheatre where I left her, telling her that we would meet at the hotel at eleven o'clock. I would not remain with her, in order to avoid the questions which would have been addressed to me, for the simpler her toilet was the more interesting she looked.

After I had left the theatre, I went to sup at Silvia's and returned to the hotel. I was surprised at the sight of an elegant carriage; I enquired to whom it belonged, and I was told that it was the carriage of a young nobleman who had supped with Mdlle. Vesian. She was getting on.

The first thing next morning, as I was putting my head out of the window, I saw a hackney coach stop at the door of the hotel; a young man, well dressed in a morning costume, came out of it, and a minute after I heard him enter the room of Mdlle. Vesian. Courage! I had made up my mind; I affected a feeling of complete indifference in order to deceive myself.

I dressed myself to go out, and while I was at my toilet Vesian came in and told me that he did not like to go into his sister's room because the gentleman who had supped with her had just arrived.

"That's a matter of course," I said.

"He is rich and very handsome. He wishes to take us himself to Versailles, and promises to procure some employment for me."

"I congratulate you. Who is he?"

"I do not know."

I placed in an envelope the papers she had entrusted to me, and I handed them to him to return to his sister. I then went out. When I came home towards three o'clock, the landlady gave me a letter which had been left for me by Mdlle. Vesian, who had left the hotel.

I went to my room, opened the letter, and read the following lines:

"I return the money you have lent me with my best thanks. The Count de Narbonne feels interested in me, and wishes to assist me and my brother. I shall inform you of everything, of the house in which he wishes me to go and live, where he promises to supply me with all I want. Your friendship is very dear to me, and I entreat you not to forget me. My brother remains at the hotel, and my room belongs to me for the month. I have paid everything."

"Here is," said I to myself, "a second Lucie de Paséan, and I am a second time the dupe of my foolish delicacy, for I feel certain that the count will not make her happy. But I wash my hands of it all."

I went to the Théâtre Français in the evening, and enquired about Narbonne. The first person I spoke to told me,——

"He is the son of a wealthy man, but a great libertine and up to his neck in debts."

Nice references, indeed! For a week I went

to all the theatres and public places in the hope of making the acquaintance of the count, but I could not succeed, and I was beginning to forget the adventure when one morning, towards eight o'clock Vesian calling on me, told me that his sister was in her room and wished to speak to me. I followed him immediately. I found her looking unhappy and with eyes red from crying. She told her brother to go out for a walk, and when he hade gone she spoke to me thus:

"M. de Narbonne, whom I thought an honest man, because I wanted him to be such, came to sit by me where you had left me at the theatre; he told me that my face had interested him, and he asked me who I was. I told him what I had told you. You had promised to think of me, but Narbonne told me that he did not want your assistance, as he could act by himself. I believed him, and I have been the dupe of my confidence in him; he has deceived me; he is a villain."

The tears were choking her: I went to the window so as to let her cry without restraint: a few minutes after, I came back and I sat down by her.

"Tell me all, my dear Vesian, unburden your heart freely, and do not think yourself guilty towards me; in reality I have been wrong more than you. Your heart would not now be a prey to sorrow if I had not been so imprudent as to leave you alone at the theatre."

"Alas, sir! do not say so; ought I to reproach you because you thought me so virtuous? Well, in a few words, the monster promised to shew me every care, every attention, on condition of my giving him an undeniable proof of my affection and confidence—namely, to take a lodging without my brother in the house of a woman whom he represented as respectable. He insisted upon my brother not living with me, saying that evil-minded persons might suppose him to be my lover. I allowed myself to be persuaded. Unhappy creature! How could I give way without consulting you? He told me that the respectable woman to whom he would take me would accompany me to Versailles, and that he would send my brother there so that we should be both presented to the war secretary. After our first supper he told me that he would come and fetch me in a hackney coach the next morning. He presented me with two louis and a gold watch, and I thought I could accept those presents from a young nobleman who shewed so much interest in me. The woman to whom he introduced me did not seem to me as respectable as he had represented her to be. I have passed one week with her without his doing anything to benefit my position. He would come, go out, return as he pleased, telling me every day that it would be the morrow, and when the morrow came there was always some impediment. At last, at seven o'clock this morn-

ing, the woman told me that the count was obliged to go into the country, that a hackney coach would bring me back to his hotel, and that he would come and see me on his return. Then, affecting an air of sadness, she told me that I must give her back the watch because the count had forgotten to pay the watchmaker for it. I handed it to her immediately without saying a word, and wrapping the little I possessed in my handkerchief I came back here, where I arrived half an hour since."

"Do you hope to see him on his return from the country?"

"To see him again! Oh, Lord! why have I ever seen him?"

She was crying bitterly, and I must confess that no young girl ever moved me so deeply as she did by the expression of her grief. Pity replaced in my heart the tenderness I had felt for her a week before. The infamous proceedings of Narbonne disgusted me to that extent that, if I had known where to find him alone, I would immediately have compelled him to give me reparation. Of course, I took good care not to ask the poor girl to give me a detailed account of her stay in the house of Narbonne's respectable procuress; I could guess even more than I wanted to know, and to insist upon that recital would have humiliated Mdlle. Vesian. I could see all the infamy of the count in the taking back of the watch which

belonged to her as a gift, and which the unhappy girl had earned but too well. I did all I could to dry her tears, and she begged me to be a father to her, assuring me that she would never again do anything to render her unworthy of my friendship, and that she would always be guided by my advice.

"Well, my dear young friend, what you must do now is not only to forget the unworthy count and his criminal conduct towards you, but also the fault of which you have been guilty. What is done cannot be undone, and the past is beyond remedy; but compose yourself, and recall the air of cheerfulness which shone on your countenance a week ago. Then I could read on your face honesty, candour, good faith, and the noble assurance which arouses sentiment in those who can appreciate its charm. You must let all those feelings shine again on your features; for they alone can interest honest people, and you require the general sympathy more than ever. My friendship is of little importance to you, but you may rely upon it all the more because I fancy that you have now a claim upon it which you had not a week ago. Be quite certain, I beg, that I will not abandon you until your position is properly settled. I cannot at present tell you more; but he sure that I will think of you."

"Ah, my friend! if you promise to think of me, I ask for no more. Oh! unhappy creature

that I am; there is not a soul in the world who thinks of me."

She was so deeply moved that she fainted away. I came to her assistance without calling anyone, and when she had recovered her consciousness and some calm, I told her a hundred stories, true or purely imaginary, of the knavish tricks played in Paris by men who think of nothing but of deceiving young girls. I told her a few amusing instances in order to make her more cheerful, and at last I told her that she ought to be thankful for what had happened to her with Narbonne, because that misfortune would give her prudence for the future.

During that long *tête-à-tête* I had no difficulty in abstaining from bestowing any caresses upon her; I did not even take her hand, for what I felt for her was a tender pity, and I was very happy when at the end of two hours I saw her calm and determined upon bearing misfortune like a heroine.

She suddenly rose from her seat, and, looking at me with an air of modest trustfulness, she said to me,——

"Are you particularly engaged in any way to-day?"

"No, my dear."

"Well, then, be good enough to take me somewhere out of Paris, to some place where I can breathe the fresh air freely; I shall then recover that appearance which you think I must have to

interest in my favour those who will see me; and if I can enjoy a quiet sleep throughout the next night I feel I shall be happy again."

"I am grateful to you for your confidence in me. We will go out as soon as I am dressed. Your brother will return in the mean time."

"Oh, never mind my brother!"

"His presence is, on the contrary, of great importance. Recollect, my dear Vesian, you must make Narbonne ashamed of his own conduct. You must consider that if he should happen to hear that, on the very day he abandoned you, you went into the country alone with me, he would triumph, and would certainly say that he has only treated you as you deserved. But if you go with your brother and me your countryman, you give no occasion for slander."

"I blush not to have made that remark myself. We will wait for my brother's return."

He was not long in coming back, and having sent for a coach we were on the point of going, when Baletti called on me. I introduced him to the young lady, and invited him to join our party. He accepted, and we started. As my only purpose was to amuse Mdlle. Vesian, I told the coachman to drive us to the Gros Caillou, where we made an excellent impromptu dinner, the cheerfulness of the guests making up for the deficiencies of the servants.

Vesian, feeling his head rather heavy, went out for a walk after dinner, and I remained alone

with his sister and my friend Baletti. I observed with pleasure that Baletti thought her an agreeable girl, and it gave me the idea of asking him to teach her dancing. I informed him of her position, of the reason which had brought her to Paris, of the little hope there was of her obtaining a pension from the king, and of the necessity there was for her to do something to earn a living. Baletti answered that he would be happy to do anything, and when he had examined the figure and the general conformation of the young girl he said to her,——

"I will get Lani to take you for the ballet at the opera."

"Then," I said, "you must begin your lessons to-morrow. Mdlle. Vesian stops at my hotel."

The young girl, full of wonder at my plan, began to laugh heartily, and said,——

"But can an opera dancer be extemporized like a minister of state? I can dance the minuet, and my ear is good enough to enable me to go through a quadrille; but with the exception of that I cannot dance one step."

"Most of the ballet girls," said Baletti, "know no more than you do."

"And how much must I ask from M. Lani? I do not think I can expect much."

"Nothing. The ballet girls are not paid."

"Then where is the advantage for me?" she said, with a sigh; "how shall I live?"

"Do not think of that. Such as you are, you will soon find ten wealthy noblemen who will dispute amongst themselves for the honour of making up for the absence of salary. You have only to make a good choice, and I am certain that it will not be long before we see you covered with diamonds."

"Now I understand you. You suppose some great lord will keep me?"

"Precisely; and that will be much better than a pension of four hundred francs, which you would, perhaps, not obtain without making the same sacrifice."

Very much surprised, she looked at me to ascertain whether I was serious or only jesting.

Baletti having left us, I told her it was truly the best thing she could do, unless she preferred the sad position of waiting-maid to some grand lady.

"I would not be the *femme de chambre* even of the queen."

"And *figurante* at the opera?"

"Much rather."

"You are smiling?"

"Yes, for it is enough to make me laugh. I the mistress of a rich nobleman, who will cover me with diamonds! Well, I mean to choose the oldest."

"Quite right, my dear; only do not make him jealous."

"I promise you to be faithful to him. But

shall he find a situation for my brother? However, until I am at the opera, until I have met with my elderly lover, who will give me the means to support myself?"

"I, my dear girl, my friend Baletti, and all my friends, without other interest than the pleasure of serving you, but with the hope that you will live quietly, and that we shall contribute to your happiness. Are you satisfied?"

"Quite so; I have promised myself to be guided entirely by your advice, and I entreat you to remain always my best friend."

We returned to Paris at night, I left Mdlle. Vesian at the hotel, and accompanied Baletti to his mother's. At supper-time, my friend begged Silvia to speak to M. Lani in favour of our *protégée* Silvia said that it was a much better plan than to solicit a miserable pension which, perhaps, would not be granted. Then we talked of a project which was then spoken of, namely to sell all the appointments of ballet girls and of chorus singers at the opera. There was even some idea of asking a high price for them, for it was argued that the higher the price the more the girls would be esteemed. Such a project, in the midst of the scandalous habits and manners of the time, had a sort of apparent wisdom; for it would have ennobled in a way a class of women who with very few exceptions seem to glory in being contemptible.

There were, at that time at the opera, several *figurantes,* singers and dancers, ugly rather than plain, without any talent, who, in spite of it all, lived in great comfort; for it is admitted that at the opera a girl must needs renounce all modesty or starve. But if a girl, newly arrived there, is clever enough to remain virtuous only for one month, her fortune is certainly made, because then the noblemen enjoying a reputation of wisdom and virtue are the only ones who seek to get hold of her. Those men are delighted to hear their names mentioned in connection with the newly-arrived beauty; they even go so far as to allow her a few frolics, provided she takes pride in what they give her, and provided her infidelities are not too public. Besides, it is the fashion never to go to sup with one's mistress without giving her notice of the intended visit, and everyone must admit that it is a very wise custom.

I came back to the hotel towards eleven o'clock, and seeing that Mdlle. Vesian's room was still open I went in. She was in bed.

"Let me get up," she said, "for I want to speak to you."

"Do not disturb yourself; we can talk all the same, and I think you much prettier as you are."

"I am very glad of it."

"What have you got to tell me?"

"Nothing, except to speak of the profession I am going to adopt. I am going to practice virtue

in order to find a man who loves it only to destroy it."

"Quite true; but almost everything is like that in this life. Man always refers everything to himself, and everyone is a tyrant in his own way. I am pleased to see you becoming a philosopher."

"How can one become a philosopher?"

"By thinking."

"Must one think a long while?"

"Throughout life."

"Then it is never over?"

"Never; but one improves as much as possible, and obtains the sum of happiness which one is susceptible of enjoying."

"And how can that happiness be felt?"

"By all the pleasure which the philosopher can procure when he is conscious of having obtained them by his own exertions, and especially by getting rid of the many prejudices which make of the majority of men a troop of grown-up children."

"What is pleasure? What is meant by prejudices?"

"Pleasure is the actual enjoyment of our senses; it is a complete satisfaction given to all our natural and sensual appetites; and, when our worn-out senses want repose, either to have breathing time, or to recover strength, pleasure comes from the imagination, which finds enjoyment in thinking of the happiness afforded by rest. The

philosopher is a person who refuses no pleasures which do not produce greater sorrows, and who knows how to create new ones."

"And you say that it is done by getting rid of prejudices? Then tell me what prejudices are, and what must be done to get rid of them."

"Your question, my dear girl, is not an easy one to answer, for moral philosophy does not know a more important one, or a more difficult one to decide; it is a lesson which lasts throughout life. I will tell you in a few words that we call prejudice every so-called duty for the existence of which we find no reason in nature."

"Then nature must be the philosopher's principal study?"

"Indeed it is; the most learned of philosophers is the one who commits the fewest errors."

"What philosopher, in your opinion, has committed the smallest quantity of errors?"

"Socrates."

"Yet he was in error sometimes?"

"Yes, in metaphysics."

"Oh! never mind that, for I think he could very well manage without that study."

"You are mistaken; morals are only the metaphysics of physics; nature is everything, and I give you leave to consider as a madman whoever tells you that he has made a new discovery in metaphysics. But if I went on, my dear, I might appear rather obscure to you. Proceed slowly,

think; let your maxims be the consequence of just reasoning, and keep your happiness in view; in the end you must be happy."

"I prefer the lesson you have just taught me to the one which M. Baletti will give me to-morrow; for I have an idea that it will weary me, and now I am much interested."

"How do you know that you are interested?"

"Because I wish you not to leave me."

"Truly, my dear Vesian, never has a philosopher described sympathy better than you have just done. How happy I feel! How is it that I wish to prove it by kissing you?"

"No doubt because, to be happy, the soul must agree with the senses."

"Indeed, my divine Vesian? Your intelligence is charming."

"It is your work, dear friend; and I am so grateful to you that I share your desires."

"What is there to prevent us from satisfying such natural desires? Let us embrace one another tenderly."

What a lesson in philosophy! It seemed to us such a sweet one, our happiness was so complete, that at day-break we were still kissing one another, and it was only when we parted in the morning that we discovered that the door of the room had remained open all night.

Baletti gave her a few lessons, and she was received at the opera; but she did not remain

there more than two or three months, regulating her conduct carefully according to the precepts I had laid out for her. She never received Narbonne again, and at last accepted a nobleman who proved himself very different from all others, for the first thing he did was to make her give up the stage, although it was not a thing according to the fashion of those days. I do not recollect his name exactly; it was Count of Tressan or Tréan. She behaved in a respectable way, and remained with him until his death. No one speaks of her now, although she is living in very easy circumstances; but she is fifty-six, and in Paris a woman of that age is no longer considered as being among the living.

After she left the Hotel de Bourgogne, I never spoke to her. Whenever I met her covered with jewels and diamonds, our souls saluted each other with joy, but her happiness was too precious for me to make any attempt against it. Her brother found a situation, but I lost sight of him.

CHAPTER IX

THE BEAUTIFUL O-MORPHI—THE DECEITFUL PAINTER —I PRACTICE CABALISM FOR THE DUCHESS DE CHARTRES—I LEAVE PARIS—MY STAY IN DRESDEN AND MY DEPARTURE FROM THAT CITY

I WENT to St. Lawrence's Fair with my friend Patu, who, taking it into his head to sup with a Flemish actress known by the name of Morphi, invited me to go with him. I felt no inclination for the girl, but what can we refuse to a friend? I did as he wished. After we had supped with the actress, Patu fancied a night devoted to a more agreeable occupation, and as I did not want to leave him I asked for a sofa on which I could sleep quietly during the night.

Morphi had a sister, a slovenly girl of thirteen, who told me that if I would give her a crown she would abandon her bed to me. I agreed to her proposal, and she took me to a small closet where I found a straw palliass on four pieces of wood.

"Do you call this a bed, my child?"

"I have no other, sir."

"Then I do not want it, and you shall not have the crown."

"Did you intend undressing yourself?"

"Of course."

"What an idea! There are no sheets."

"Do you sleep with your clothes on?"

"Oh, no!"

"Well, then, go to bed as usual, and you shall have the crown."

"Why?"

"I want to see you undressed."

"But you won't do anything to me?"

"Not the slightest thing."

She undressed, laid herself on her miserable straw bed, and covered herself with an old curtain. In that state, the impression made by her dirty tatters disappeared, and I only saw a perfect beauty. But I wanted to see her entirely. I tried to satisfy my wishes, she opposed some resistance, but a double crown of six francs made her obedient, and finding that her only fault was a complete absence of cleanliness, I began to wash her with my own hands.

You will allow me, dear reader, to suppose that you possess a simple and natural knowledge, namely, that admiration under such circumstances is inseparable from another kind of approbation; luckily, I found the young Morphi disposed to let me do all I pleased, except the only thing for which I did not care! She told me candidly that she would not

allow me to do that one thing, because in her sister's estimation it was worth twenty-five louis. I answered that we would bargain on that capital point another time, but that we would not touch it for the present. Satisfied with what I said, all the rest was at my disposal, and I found in her a talent which had attained great perfection in spite of her precocity.

The young Hélène faithfully handed to her sister the six francs I had given her, and she told her the way in which she had earned them. Before I left the house she told me that, as she was in want of money, she felt disposed to make some abatement on the price of twenty-five louis. I answered with a laugh that I would see her about it the next day. I related the whole affair to Patu, who accused me of exaggeration; and wishing to prove to him that I was a real *connoisseur* of female beauty I insisted upon his seeing Hélène as I had seen her. He agreed with me that the chisel of Praxiteles had never carved anything more perfect. As white as a lily, Hélène possessed all the beauties which nature and the art of the painter can possibly combine. The loveliness of her features was so heavenly that it carried to the soul an indefinable sentiment of ecstacy, a delightful calm. She was fair, but her beautiful blue eyes equalled the finest black eyes in brilliance.

I went to see her the next evening, and, not agreeing about the price, I made a bargain with

her sister to give her twelve francs every time I paid her a visit, and it was agreed that we would occupy her room until I should make up my mind to pay six hundred francs. It was regular usury, but the Morphi came from a Greek race, and was above prejudices. I had no idea of giving such a large sum, because I felt no wish to obtain what it would have procured me; what I obtained was all I cared for.

The elder sister thought I was duped, for in two months I had paid three hundred francs without having done anything, and she attributed my reserve to avarice. Avarice, indeed! I took a fancy to possess a painting of that beautiful body, and a German artist painted it for me splendidly for six louis. The position in which he painted it was delightful. She was lying on her stomach, her arms and her bosom leaning on a pillow, and holding her head sideways as if she were partly on the back. The clever and tasteful artist had painted her nether parts with so much skill and truth that no one could have wished for anything more beautiful; I was delighted with that portrait; it was a speaking likeness, and I wrote under it, *"O-Morphi,"* not a Homeric word, but a Greek one after all, and meaning *beautiful.*

But who can anticipate the wonderful and secret decrees of destiny! My friend Patu wished to have a copy of that portrait; one cannot refuse such a slight service to a friend, and I gave an

order for it to the same painter. But the artist, having been summoned to Versailles, shewed that delightful painting with several others, and M. de St. Quentin found it so beautiful that he lost no time in shewing it the king. His Most Christian Majesty, a great connoisseur in that line, wished to ascertain with his own eyes if the artist had made a faithful copy; and in case the original should prove as beautiful as the copy, the son of St. Louis knew very well what to do with it.

M. de St. Quentin, the king's trusty friend, had the charge of that important affair; it was his province. He enquired from the painter whether the original could be brought to Versailles, and the artist, not supposing there would be any difficulty, promised to attend to it.

He therefore called on me to communicate the proposal; I thought it was delightful, and I immediately told the sister, who jumped for joy. She set to work cleaning, washing and clothing the young beauty, and two or three days after they went to Versailles with the painter to see what could be done. M. de St. Quentin's valet, having received his instructions from his master, took the two females to a pavilion in the park, and the painter went to the hotel to await the result of his negociation. Half an hour afterwards the king entered the pavilion alone, asked the young O-Morphi if she was a Greek woman, took the

portrait out of his pocket, and after a careful examination exclaimed,——

"I have never seen a better likeness."

His majesty then sat down, took the young girl on his knees, bestowed a few caresses on her, and having ascertained with his royal hand that the fruit had not yet been plucked, he gave her a kiss.

O-Morphi was looking attentively at her master, and smiled.

"What are you laughing at?" said the king.

"I laugh because you and a crown of six francs are as like as two peas."

That *naïveté* made the king laugh heartily, and he asked her whether she would like to remain in Versailles.

"That depends upon my sister," answered the child.

But the sister hastened to tell the king that she could not aspire to a greater honour. The king locked them up again in the pavilion and went away, but in less than a quarter of an hour St. Quentin came to fetch them, placed the young girl in an apartment under the care of a female attendant, and with the sister he went to meet at the hotel the German artist to whom he gave fifty louis for the portrait, and nothing to Morphi. He only took her address, promising her that she would soon hear from him; the next day she received one thousand louis. The worthy German gave me

twenty-five louis for my portrait, with a promise to make a careful copy of the one I had given to Patu, and he offered to paint for me gratuitously the likeness of every girl of whom I might wish to keep a portrait.

I enjoyed heartily the pleasure of the good Fleming, when she found herself in possession of the thousand gold pieces which she had received. Seeing herself rich, and considering me as the author of her fortune, she did not know how to shew me her gratitude.

The young and lovely O-Morphi—for the king always called her by that name—pleased the sovereign by her simplicity and her pretty ways more even than by her rare beauty—the most perfect, the most regular, I recollect to have ever seen. He placed her in one of the apartments of his *Parc-aux-cerfs*—the voluptuous monarch's harem, in which no one could get admittance except the ladies presented at the court. At the end of one year she gave birth to a son who went, like so many others, God knows where! for as long as Queen Mary lived no one ever knew what became of the natural children of Louis XV.

O-Morphi fell into disgrace at the end of three years. but the king, as he sent her away, ordered her to receive a sum of four hundred thousand francs which she brought as a dowry to an officer from Britanny. In 1783, happening to be in Fontainebleau, I made the acquaintance of a charming

young man of twenty-five, the offspring of that marriage and the living portrait of his mother, of the history of whom he had not the slightest knowledge, and I thought it my duty not to enlighten him. I wrote my name on his tablets, and I begged him to present my compliments to his mother.

A wicked trick of Madame de Valentinois, sister-in-law of the Prince of Monaco, was the cause of O-Morphi's disgrace. That lady, who was well known in Paris, told her one day that, if she wished to make the king very merry, she had only to ask him how he treated his old wife. Too simple to guess the snare thus laid out for her, O-Morphi actually asked that impertinent question; but Louis XV. gave her a look of fury, and exclaimed,—

"Miserable wretch! who taught you to address me that question?"

The poor O-Morphi, almost dead with fright, threw herself on her knees, and confessed the truth.

The king left her and never would see her again. The Countess de Valentinois was exiled for two years from the court. Louis XV., who knew how wrongly he was behaving towards his wife as a husband, would not deserve any reproach at her hands as a king, and woe to anyone who forgot the respect due to the queen!

The French are undoubtedly the most witty people in Europe, and perhaps in the whole world, but Paris is, all the same, the city for impostors and quacks to make a fortune. When their knavery is

found out people turn it into a joke and laugh, but in the midst of the merriment another mountebank makes his appearance, who does something more wonderful than those who preceded him, and he makes his fortune whilst the scoffing of the people is in abeyance. It is the unquestionable effects of the power which fashion has over that amiable, clever, and lively nation. If anything is astonishing, no matter how extravagant it may be, the crowd is sure to welcome it greedily, for anyone would be afraid of being taken for a fool if he should exclaim, "It is impossible!" Physicians are, perhaps, the only men in France who know that an infinite gulf yawns between the will and the deed, whilst in Italy it is an axiom known to everybody; but I do not mean to say that the Italians are superior to the French.

A certain painter met with great success for some time by announcing a thing which was an impossibility—namely, by pretending that he could take a portrait of a person without seeing the individual, and only from the description given. But he wanted the description to be thoroughly accurate. The result of it was that the portrait did greater honour to the person who gave the description than to the painter himself, but at the same time the informer found himself under the obligation of finding the likeness very good; otherwise the artist alleged the most legitimate excuse, and said that if the likeness was not perfect the fault was to be

ascribed to the person who had given an imperfect description.

One evening I was taking supper at Silvia's when one of the guests spoke of that wonderful new artist, without laughing, and with every appearance of believing the whole affair.

"That painter," added he, "has already painted more than one hundred portraits, and they are all perfect likenesses."

Everybody was of the same opinion; it was splendid. I was the only one who, laughing heartily, took the liberty of saying it was absurd and impossible. The gentleman who had brought the wonderful news, feeling angry, proposed a wager of one hundred louis. I laughed all the more because his offer could not be accepted unless I exposed myself to being made a dupe.

"But the portraits are all admirable likenesses."

"I do not believe it, or if they are then there must be cheating somewhere."

But the gentleman, being bent upon convincing Silvia and me—for she had taken my part—proposed to make us dine with the artist; and we accepted.

The next day we called upon the painter, where we saw a quantity of portraits, all of which the artist claimed to be speaking likenesses; as we did not know the persons whom they represented we could not deny his claim.

"Sir," said Silvia to the artist, "could you

paint the likeness of my daughter without seeing her?"

"Yes, madam, if you are certain of giving me an exact description of the expression of her features."

We exchanged a glance, and no more was said about it. The painter told us that supper was his favourite meal, and that he would be delighted if we would often give him the pleasure of our company. Like all quacks, he possessed an immense quantity of letters and testimonials from Bordeaux, Toulouse, Lyons, Rouen, etc., which paid the highest compliments to the perfection of his portraits, or gave descriptions for new pictures ordered from him. His portraits, by the way, had to be paid for in advance.

Two or three days afterwards I met his pretty niece, who obligingly upbraided me for not having yet availed myself of her uncle's invitation to supper; the niece was a dainty morsel worthy of a king, and, her reproaches being very flattering to my vanity I promised I would come the next day. In less than a week it turned out a serious engagement. I fell in love with the interesting niece, who, being full of wit and well disposed to enjoy herself, had no love for me, and granted me no favour. I hoped, and, feeling that I was caught, I felt it was the only thing I could do.

One day that I was alone in my room, drinking my coffee and thinking of her, the door was

suddenly opened without anyone being announced, and a young man came in. I did not recollect him, but, without giving me time to ask any questions, he said to me,—

"Sir, I have had the honour of meeting you at the supper-table of M. Samson, the painter."

"Ah! yes; I beg you to excuse me, sir, I did not at first recollect you."

"It is natural, for your eyes are always on Mdlle. Samson."

"Very likely, but you must admit that she is a charming creature."

"I have no difficulty whatever in agreeing with you; to my misery, I know it but too well."

"You are in love with her?"

"Alas, yes! and I say, again, to my misery."

"To your misery? But why, do not you gain her love?"

"That is the very thing I have been striving for since last year, and I was beginning to have some hope when your arrival has reduced me to despair."

"I have reduced you to despair?"

"Yes, sir."

"I am very sorry, but I cannot help it."

"You could easily help it; and, if you would allow me, I could suggest to you the way in which you could greatly oblige me."

"Speak candidly."

"You might never put your foot in the house again."

"That is a rather singular proposal, but I agree that it is truly the only thing I can do if I have a real wish to oblige you. Do you think, however, that in that case you would succeed in gaining her affection?"

"Then it will be my business to succeed. Do not go there again, and I will take care of the rest."

"I might render you that very great service; but you must confess that you must have a singular opinion of me to suppose that I am a man to do such a thing."

"Yes, sir, I admit that it may appear singular; but I take you for a man of great sense and sound intellect, and after considering the subject deeply I have thought that you would put yourself in my place; that you would not wish to make me miserable, or to expose your own life for a young girl who can have inspired you with but a passing fancy, whilst my only wish is to secure the happiness or the misery of my life, whichever it may prove, by uniting her existence with mine."

"But suppose that I should intend, like you, to ask her in marriage?"

"Then we should both be worthy of pity, and one of us would have ceased to exist before the other obtained her, for as long as I shall live Mdlle. Samson shall not be the wife of another."

This young man, well-made, pale, grave, as cold as a piece of marble, madly in love, who, in his reason mixed with utter despair, came to speak

to me in such a manner with the most surprising calm, made me pause and consider. Undoubtedly I was not afraid, but although in love with Mdlle. Samson I did not feel my passion sufficiently strong to cut the throat of a man for the sake of her beautiful eyes, or to lose my own life to defend my budding affection. Without answering the young man, I began to pace up and down my room, and for a quarter of an hour I weighed the following question which I put to myself: Which decision will appear more manly in the eyes of my rival and will win my own esteem to the deeper degree, namely—to accept coolly his offer to cut one another's throats, or to allay his anxiety by withdrawing from the field with dignity?

Pride whispered, Fight; Reason said, Compel thy rival to acknowledge thee a wiser man than he is.

"What would you think of me, sir," I said to him, with an air of decision, "if I consented to give up my visits to Mdlle. Samson?"

"I would think that you had pity on a miserable man, and I say that in that case you will ever find me ready to shed the last drop of my blood to prove my deep gratitude."

"Who are you?"

"My name is Garnier, I am the only son of M. Garnier, wine merchant in the Rue de Seine."

"Well, M. Garnier, I will never again call on Mdlle. Samson. Let us be friends."

"Until death. Farewell, sir."

"Adieu, be happy!"

Patu came in five minutes after Garnier had left me: I related the adventure to him, and he thought I was a hero.

"I would have acted as you have done," he observed, "but I would not have acted like Garnier."

It was about that time that the Count de Melfort, colonel of the Orleans regiment, entreated me through Camille, Coraline's sister, to answer two questions by means of my cabalism. I gave two answers very vague, yet meaning a great deal; I put them under a sealed envelope and gave them to Camille, who asked me the next day to accompany her to a place which she said she could not name to me. I followed her; she took me to the Palais-Royal, and then, through a narrow staircase, to the apartments of the Duchess de Chartres. I waited about a quarter of an hour, at the end of which time the duchess came in and loaded Camille with caresses for having brought me. Then addressing herself to me, she told me, with dignity yet very graciously, the difficulty she experienced in understanding the answers I had sent and which she was holding in her hand. At first I expressed some perplexity at the questions having emanated from her royal highness, and I told her afterwards that I understood cabalism, but that I could not interpret the meaning of the answers obtained

through it, and that her highness must ask new questions likely to render the answers easier to be understood. She wrote down all she could not make out and all she wanted to know.

"Madam, you must be kind enough to divide the questions, for the cabalistic oracle never answers two questions at the same time."

"Well, then, prepare the questions yourself."

"Your highness will excuse me, but every word must be written with your own hand. Recollect, madam, that you will address yourself to a superior intelligence knowing all your secrets."

She began to write, and asked seven or eight questions. She read them over carefully, and said, with a face beaming with noble confidence,—

"Sir, I wish to be certain that no one shall ever know what I have just written."

"Your highness may rely on my honour."

I read attentively, and I saw that her wish for secrecy was reasonable, and that if I put the questions in my pocket I should run the risk of losing them and implicating myself.

"I only require three hours to complete my task," I said to the duchess, "and I wish your highness to feel no anxiety. If you have any other engagement you can leave me here alone, provided I am not disturbed by anybody. When it is completed, I will put it all in a sealed envelope; I only want your highness to tell me to whom I must deliver the parcel."

"Either to me or to Madame de Polignac, if you know her."

"Yes, madam, I have the honour to know her."

The duchess handed me a small tinder-box to enable me to light a wax-candle, and she went away with Camille. I remained alone locked up in the room, and at the end of three hours, just as I had completed my task, Madame de Polignac came for the parcel and I left the palace.

The Duchess de Chartres, daughter of the Prince of Conti, was twenty-six years of age. She was endowed with that particular sort of wit which renders a woman adorable. She was lively, above the prejudices of rank, cheerful, full of jest, a lover of pleasure, which she preferred to a long life. "Short and sweet," were the words she had constantly on her lips. She was pretty but she stood badly, and used to laugh at Marcel, the teacher of graceful deportment, who wanted to correct her awkward bearing. She kept her head bent forward and her feet turned inside when dancing; yet she was a charming dancer. Unfortunately her face was covered with pimples, which injured her beauty very greatly. Her physicians thought that they were caused by a disease of the liver, but they came from impurity of the blood, which at last killed her, and from which she suffered throughout her life.

The questions she had asked from my oracle

related to affairs connected with her heart, and she wished likewise to know how she could get rid of the blotches which disfigured her. My answers were rather obscure in such matters as I was not specially acquainted with, but they were very clear concerning her disease, and my oracle became precious and necessary to her highness.

The next day, after dinner, Camille wrote me a note, as I expected, requesting me to give up all other engagements in order to present myself at five o'clock at the Palais-Royal, in the same room in which the duchess had already received me the day before. I was punctual. An elderly *valet de chambre,* who was waiting for me, immediately went to give notice of my arrival, and five minutes after the charming princess made her appearance. After addressing me in a very complimentary manner, she drew all my answers from her pocket, and enquired whether I had any pressing engagements.

"Your highness may be certain that I shall never have any more important business than to attend to your wishes."

"Very well; I do not intend to go out, and we can work."

She then shewed me all the questions which she had already prepared on different subjects, and particularly those relating to the cure of her pimples. One circumstance had contributed to render my oracle precious to her, because nobody could possibly know it, and I had guessed it. Had

I not done so, I daresay it would have been all the same. I had laboured myself under the same disease, and I was enough of a physician to be aware that to attempt the cure of a cutaneous disease by active remedies might kill the patient.

I had already answered that she could not get rid of the pimples on her face in less than a week, but that a year of diet would be necessary to effect a radical cure.

We spent three hours in ascertaining what she was to do, and, believing implicitly in the power and in the science of the oracle, she undertook to follow faithfully everything ordered. Within one week all the ugly pimples had entirely disappeared.

I took care to purge her slightly; I prescribed every day what she was to eat, and forbade the use of all cosmetics; I only advised her to wash herself morning and evening with plantain water. The modest oracle told the princess to make use of the same water for her ablutions of every part of her body where she desired to obtain the same result, and she obeyed the prescription religiously.

I went to the opera on purpose on the day when the duchess shewed herself there with a smooth and rosy skin. After the opera, she took a walk in the great alley of the Palais-Royal, followed by the ladies of her suite and flattered by everybody. She saw me, and honoured me with a smile. I was truly happy. Camille, Madame de Polignac, and M. de Melfort were the only persons

who knew that I was the oracle of the duchess, and I enjoyed my success. But the next day a few pimples reappeared on her beautiful complexion, and I received an order to repair at once to the Palais-Royal.

The valet, who did not know me, shewed me into a delightful boudoir near a closet in which there was a bath. The duchess came in; she looked sad, for she had several small pimples on the forehead and the chin. She held in her hand a question for the oracle, and as it was only a short one I thought I would give her the pleasure of finding the answer by herself. The numbers translated by the princess reproached her with having transgressed the regimen prescribed; she confessed to having drunk some liquors and eaten some ham; but she was astounded at having found that answer herself, and she could not understand how such an answer could result from an agglomeration of numbers. At that moment, one of her women came in to whisper a few words to her; she told her to wait outside, and turning towards me, she said,—

"Have you any objection to seeing one of your friends who is as delicate as discreet?"

With these words, she hastily concealed in her pocket all the papers which did not relate to her disease; then she called out.

A man entered the room, whom I took for a stable-boy; it was M. de Melfort.

"See," said the princess to him, "M. Casanova has taught me the cabalistic science."

And she shewed him the answer she had obtained herself. The count could not believe it.

"Well," said the duchess to me, "we must convince him. What shall I ask?"

"Anything your highness chooses."

She considered for one instant, and, drawing from her pocket a small ivory box, she wrote, "Tell me why this pomatum has no longer any effect."

She formed the pyramid, the columns, and the key, as I had taught her, and as she was ready to get the answer, I told her how to make the additions and subtractions which seem to come from the numbers, but which in reality are only arbitrary; then I told her to interpret the numbers in letters, and I left the room under some pretext. I came back when I thought that she had completed her translation, and I found her wrapped in amazement.

"Ah, sir!" she exclaimed, "what an answer!"

"Perhaps it is not the right one; but that will sometimes happen, madam."

"Not the right one, sir? It is divine! Here it is: That pomatum has no effect upon the skin of a woman who has been a mother."

"I do not see anything extraordinary in that answer, madam."

"Very likely, sir, but it is because you do

not know that the pomatum in question was given to me five years ago by the Abbé de Brosses; it cured me at that time, but it was ten months before the birth of the Duke de Montpensier. I would give anything in the world to be thoroughly acquainted with that sublime cabalistic science."

"What!" said the count, "is it the pomatum the history of which I know?"

"Precisely."

"It is astonishing."

"I wish to ask one more question concerning a woman the name of whom I would rather not give."

"Say the woman whom I have in my thoughts."

She then asked this question: "What disease is that woman suffering from?" She made the calculation, and the answer which I made her bring forth was this: "She wants to deceive her husband." This time the duchess fairly screamed with astonishment.

It was getting very late, and I was preparing to take leave, when M. de Melfort, who was speaking to her highness, told me that we might go together. When we were out, he told me that the cabalistic answer concerning the pomatum was truly wonderful. This was the history of it:

"The duchess, pretty as you see her now, had her face so fearfully covered with pimples that the

duke, thoroughly disgusted, had not the courage to come near her to enjoy his rights as a husband. and the poor princess was pining with useless longing to become a mother. The Abbé de Brosses cured her with that pomatum, and her beautiful face having entirely recovered its original bloom she made her appearance at the Théâtre Français, in the queen's box. The Duke de Chartres, not knowing that his wife had gone to the theatre, where she went but very seldom, was in the king's box. He did not recognize the duchess, but thinking her very handsome he enquired who she was, and when he was told he would not believe it; he left the royal box, went to his wife, complimented her, and announced his visit for the very same night. The result of that visit was, nine months afterwards, the birth of the Duke de Montpensier, who is now five years old and enjoys excellent health. During the whole of her pregnancy the duchess kept her face smooth and blooming, but immediately after her delivery the pimples reappeared, and the pomatum remained without any effect."

As he concluded his explanation, the count offered me a tortoise-shell box with a very good likeness of her royal highness, and said,—

"The duchess begs your acceptance of this portrait, and, in case you would like to have it set she wishes you to make use of this for that purpose."

It was a purse of one hundred louis. I accepted both, and entreated the count to offer the expressions of my profound gratitude to her highness. I never had the portrait mounted, for I was then in want of money for some other purpose.

After that, the duchess did me the honour of sending for me several times; but her cure remained altogether out of the question; she could not make up her mind to follow a regular diet. She would sometimes keep me at work for five or six hours, now in one corner, now in another, going in and out herself all the time, and having either dinner or supper brought to me by the old valet, who never uttered a word.

Her questions to the oracle alluded only to secret affairs which she was curious to know, and she often found truths with which I was not myself acquainted, through the answers. She wished me to teach her the cabalistic science, but she never pressed her wish upon me. She, however, commissioned M. de Melfort to tell me that, if I would teach her, she would get me an appointment with an income of twenty-five thousand francs. Alas! it was impossible! I was madly in love with her, but I would not for the world have allowed her to guess my feelings. My pride was the corrective of my love. I was afraid of her haughtiness humiliating me, and perhaps I was wrong. All I know is that I even now repent of having listened to a foolish pride. It is true that I enjoyed certain privileges

which she might have refused me if she had known my love.

One day she wished my oracle to tell her whether it was possible to cure a cancer which Madame de la Popelinière had in the breast; I took it in my head to answer that the lady alluded to had no cancer, and was enjoying excellent health.

"How is that?" said the duchess; "everyone in Paris believes her to be suffering from a cancer, and she has consultation upon consultation. Yet I have faith in the oracle."

Soon afterwards, seeing the Duke de Richelieu at the court, she told him she was certain that Madame de la Popelinière was not ill. The marshal, who knew the secret, told her that she was mistaken; but she proposed a wager of a hundred thousand francs. I trembled when the duchess related the conversation to me.

"Has he accepted your wager?" I enquired, anxiously.

"No; he seemed surprised; you are aware that he ought to know the truth."

Three or four days after that conversation, the duchess told me triumphantly that M. de Richelieu had confessed to her that the cancer was only a *ruse* to excite the pity of her husband, with whom Madame de la Popelinière wanted to live again on good terms; she added that the marshal had expressed his willingness to pay one thousand louis to know how she had discovered the truth.

"If you wish to earn that sum," said the duchess to me, "I will tell him all about it."

But I was afraid of a snare; I knew the temper of the marshal, and the story of the hole in the wall, through which he introduced himself into that lady's apartment, was the talk of all Paris. M. de la Popelinière himself had made the adventure more public by refusing to live with his wife, to whom he paid an income of twelve thousand francs.

The Duchess de Chartres had written some charming poetry on that amusing affair; but out of her own coterie no one knew it except the king, who was fond of the princess, although she was in the habit of scoffing at him. One day, for instance, she asked him whether it was true that the king of Prussia was expected in Paris. Louis XV. having answered that it was an idle rumour,—

"I am very sorry," she said, "for I am longing to see a king."

My brother had completed several pictures and having decided on presenting one to M. de Marigny, we repaired one morning to the apartment of that nobleman, who lived in the Louvre, where all the artists were in the habit of paying their court to him. We were shewn into a hall adjoining his private apartment, and having arrived early we waited for M. de Marigny. My brother's picture was exposed there; it was a battle piece in the style of Bourguignon.

The first person who passed through the room stopped before the picture, examined it attentively, and moved on, evidently thinking that it was a poor painting; a moment afterwards two more persons came in, looked at the picture, smiled, and said,—

"That's the work of a beginner."

I glanced at my brother, who was seated near me; he was in a fever. In less than a quarter of an hour the room was full of people, and the unfortunate picture was the butt of everybody's laughter. My poor brother felt almost dying, and thanked his stars that no one knew him personally.

The state of his mind was such that I heartily pitied him; I rose with the intention of going to some other room, and to console him I told him that M. de Marigny would soon come, and that his approbation of the picture would avenge him for the insults of the crowd. Fortunately, this was not my brother's opinion; we left the room hurriedly, took a coach, went home, and sent our servant to fetch back the painting. As soon as it had been brought back my brother made a battle of it in real earnest, for he cut it up with a sword into twenty pieces. He made up his mind to settle his affairs in Paris immediately, and to go somewhere else to study an art which he loved to idolatry; we resolved on going to Dresden together.

Two or three days before leaving the deligtful city of Paris I dined alone at the house of the gate-

keeper of the Tuileries; his name was Condé. After dinner his wife, a rather pretty woman, presented me the bill, on which every item was reckoned at double its value. I pointed it out to her, but she answered very curtly that she could not abate one sou. I paid, and as the bill was receipted with the words *femme Condé,* I took the pen and to the word *Condé* I added *labre,* and I went away leaving the bill on the table.

I was taking a walk in the Tuileries, not thinking any more of my female extortioner, when a small man, with his hat cocked on one side of his head and a large nosegay in his button-hole, and sporting a long sword, swaggered up to me and informed me, without any further explanation, that he had a fancy to cut my throat.

"But, my small specimen of humanity," I said, "you would require to jump on a chair to reach my throat. I will cut your ears."

"*Sacre bleu,* monsieur!"

"No vulgar passion, my dear sir; follow me; you shall soon be satisfied."

I walked rapidly towards the Porte de l'Etoile, where, seeing that the place was deserted, I abruptly asked the fellow what he wanted, and why he had attacked me.

"I am the Chevalier de Talvis," he answered. "You have insulted an honest woman who is under my protection; unsheath!"

With these words he drew his long sword; I

unsheathed mine; after a minute or two I lunged rapidly, and wounded him in the breast. He jumped backward, exclaiming that I had wounded him treacherously.

"You lie, you rascally mannikin! acknowledge it, or I thrust my sword through your miserable body."

"You will not do it, for I am wounded; but I insist upon having my revenge, and we will leave the decision of this to competent judges."

"Miserable wrangler, wretched fighter, if you are not satisfied, I will cut off your ears!"

I left him there, satisfied that I had acted according to the laws of the duello, for he had drawn his sword before me, and if he had not been skilful enough to cover himself in good time, it was not, of course, my business to teach him. Towards the middle of August I left Paris with my brother. I had made a stay of two years in that city, the best in the world. I had enjoyed myself greatly, and had met with no unpleasantness except that I had been now and then short of money. We went through Metz, Mayence, and Frankfort, and arrived in Dresden at the end of the same month. My mother offered us the most affectionate welcome, and was delighted to see us again. My brother remained four years in that pleasant city, constantly engaged in the study of his art, and copying all the fine paintings of battles by the great masters in the celebrated Electoral Gallery.

He went back to Paris only when he felt certain that he could set criticism at defiance; I shall say hereafter how it was that we both reached that city about the same time. But before that period, dear reader, you will see what good and adverse fortune did for or against me.

My life in Dresden until the end of the carnival in 1753 does not offer any extraordinary adventure. To please the actors, and especially my mother, I wrote a kind of melodrama, in which I brought out two harlequins. It was a parody of the *Frères Ennemis,* by Racine. The king was highly amused at the comic fancies which filled my play, and he made me a beautiful present. The king was grand and generous, and these qualities found a ready echo in the breast of the famous Count de Brühl. I left Dresden soon after that, bidding adieu to my mother, to my brother François, and to my sister, then the wife of Pierre Auguste, chief player of the harpsichord at the Court, who died two years ago, leaving his widow and family in comfortable circumstances.

My stay in Dresden was marked by an amorous souvenir of which I got rid, as in previous similar circumstances, by a diet of six weeks. I have often remarked that the greatest part of my life was spent in trying to make myself ill, and when I had succeeded, in trying to recover my health. I have met with equal success in both things; and now that I enjoy excellent health in that line, I am very

sorry to be physically unable to make myself ill again; but age, that cruel and unavoidable disease, compels me to be in good health in spite of myself. The illness I allude to, which the Italians call *mal français,* although we might claim the honour of its first importation, does not shorten life, but it leaves indelible marks on the face. Those scars, less honourable perhaps than those which are won in the service of Mars, being obtained through pleasure, ought not to leave any regret behind.

In Dresden I had frequent opportunities of seeing the king, who was very fond of the Count de Brühl, his minister, because that favourite possessed the double secret of shewing himself more extravagant even than his master, and of indulging all his whims.

Never was a monarch a greater enemy to economy; he laughed heartily when he was plundered and he spent a great deal in order to have occasion to laugh often. As he had not sufficient wit to amuse himself with the follies of other kings and with the absurdities of humankind, he kept four buffoons, who are called fools in Germany, although these degraded beings are generally more witty than their masters. The province of those jesters is to make their owner laugh by all sorts of jokes which are usually nothing but disgusting tricks, or low, impertinent jests.

Yet these professional buffoons sometimes captivate the mind of their master to such an extent

that they obtain from him very important favours in behalf of the persons they protect, and the consequence is that they are often courted by the highest families. Where is the man who will not debase himself if he be in want? Does not Agamemnon say, in Homer, that in such a case man must necessarily be guilty of meanness? And Agamemnon and Homer lived long before our time! It evidently proves that men are at all times moved by the same motive—namely, self-interest.

It is wrong to say that the Count de Brühl was the ruin of Saxony, for he was only the faithful minister of his royal master's inclinations. His children are poor, and justify their father's conduct.

The court at Dresden was at that time the most brilliant in Europe; the fine arts flourished, but there was no gallantry, for King Augustus had no inclination for the fair sex, and the Saxons were not of a nature to be thus inclined unless the example was set by their sovereign.

At my arrival in Prague, where I did not intend to stop, I delivered a letter I had for Locatelli, manager of the opera, and went to pay a visit to Madame Morelli, an old acquaintance, for whom I had great affection, and for two or three days she supplied all the wants of my heart.

As I was on the point of leaving Prague, I met in the street my friend Fabris, who had become a colonel, and he insisted upon my dining with him. After embracing him, I represented to him, but in

vain, that I had made all my arrangements to go away immediately.

"You will go this evening," he said, "with a friend of mine, and you will catch the coach."

I had to give way, and I was delighted to have done so, for the remainder of the day passed in the most agreeable manner. Fabris was longing for war, and his wishes were gratified two years afterwards; he covered himself with glory.

I must say one word about Locatelli, who was an original character well worthy to be known. He took his meals every day at a table laid out for thirty persons, and the guests were his actors, actresses, dancers of both sexes, and a few friends. He did the honours of his well-supplied board nobly, and his real passion was good living. I shall have occasion to mention him again at the time of my journey to St. Petersburg, where I met him, and where he died only lately at the age of ninety.

CHAPTER X

MY STAY IN VIENNA—JOSEPH II—MY DEPARTURE FOR VENICE

I ARRIVED, for the first time, in the capital of Austria, at the age of eight-and-twenty, well provided with clothes, but rather short of money—a circumstance which made it necessary for me to curtail my expenses until the arrival of the proceeds of a letter of exchange which I had drawn upon M. de Bragadin. The only letter of recommendation I had was from the poet Migliavacca, of Dresden, addressed to the illustrious Abbé Metastasio, whom I wished ardently to know. I delivered the letter the day after my arrival, and in one hour of conversation I found him more learned than I should have supposed from his works. Besides, Metastasio was so modest that at first I did not think that modesty natural, but it was not long before I discovered that it was genuine, for when he recited something of his own composition, he was the first to call the attention of his hearers to the important parts or to the fine passages with

as much simplicity as he would remark the weak ones. I spoke to him of his tutor Gravina, and as we were on that subject he recited to me five or six stanzas which he had written on his death, and which had not been printed. Moved by the remembrance of his friend, and by the sad beauty of his own poetry, his eyes were filled with tears, and when he had done reciting the stanzas he said, in a tone of touching simplicity, *Ditemi il vero, si puo dir meglio?*

I answered that he alone had the right to believe it impossible. I then asked him whether he had to work a great deal to compose his beautiful poetry; he shewed me four or five pages which he had covered with erasures and words crossed and scratched out only because he had wished to bring fourteen lines to perfection, and he assured me that he had never been able to compose more than that number in one day. He confirmed my knowledge of a truth which I had found out before, namely, that the very lines which most readers believe to have flowed easily from the poet's pen are generally those which he has had the greatest difficulty in composing.

"Which of your operas," I enquired, "do you like best?"

"Attilio Regolo; ma questo non vuol già dire che sia il migliore."

"All your works have been translated in Paris into French prose, but the publisher was ruined, for

it is not possible to read them, and it proves the elevation and the power of your poetry."

"Several years ago, another foolish publisher ruined himself by a translation into French prose of the splendid poetry of Ariosto. I laugh at those who maintain that poetry can be translated into prose."

"I am of your opinion."

"And you are right."

He told me that he had never written an arietta without composing the music of it himself, but that as a general rule he never shewed his music to anyone.

"The French," he added, "entertain the very strange belief that it is possible to adapt poetry to music already composed."

And he made on that subject this very philosophical remark:

"You might just as well say to a sculptor, 'Here is a piece of marble, make a Venus, and let her expression be shewn before the features are chiselled.' "

I went to the Imperial Library, and was much surprised to meet De la Haye in the company of two Poles, and a young Venetian whom his father had entrusted to him to complete his education. I believed him to be in Poland, and as the meeting recalled interesting recollections I was pleased to see him. I embraced him repeatedly with real pleasure.

He told me that he was in Vienna on business, and that he would go to Venice during the summer. We paid one another several visits, and hearing that I was rather short of money he lent me fifty ducats, which I returned a short time after. He told me that Bavois was already lieutenant-colonel in the Venetian army, and the news afforded me great pleasure. He had been fortunate enough to be appointed adjutant-general by M. Morosini, who, after his return from his embassy in France, had made him Commissary of the Borders. I was delighted to hear of the happiness and success of two men who certainly could not help acknowledging me as the original cause of their good fortune. In Vienna I acquired the certainty of De la Haye being a Jesuit, but he would not let anyone allude to the subject.

Not knowing where to go, and longing for some recreation, I went to the rehearsal of the opera which was to be performed after Easter, and met Bodin, the first dancer, who had married the handsome Jeoffroi, whom I had seen in Turin. I likewise met in the same place Campioni, the husband of the beautiful Ancilla. He told me that he had been compelled to apply for a divorce because she dishonoured him too publicly. Campioni was at the same time a great dancer and a great gambler. I took up my lodgings with him.

In Vienna everything is beautiful; money was then very plentiful, and luxury very great; but the

severity of the empress made the worship of Venus difficult, particularly for strangers. A legion of vile spies, who were decorated with the fine title of *Commissaries of Chastity,* were the merciless tormentors of all the girls. The empress did not practise the sublime virtue of tolerance for what is called illegitimate love, and in her excessive devotion she thought that her persecutions of the most natural inclinations in man and woman were very agreeable to God. Holding in her imperial hands the register of cardinal sins, she fancied that she could be indulgent for six of them, and keep all her severity for the seventh, lewdness, which in her estimation could not be forgiven.

"One can ignore pride," she would say, "for dignity wears the same garb. Avarice is fearful, it is true; but one might be mistaken about it, because it is often very like economy. As for anger, it is a murderous disease in its excess, but murder is punished with death. Gluttony is sometimes nothing but epicurism, and religion does not forbid that sin; for in good company it is held a valuable quality; besides, it blends itself with appetite, and so much the worse for those who die of indigestion. Envy is a low passion which no one ever avows; to punish it in any other way than by its own corroding venom, I would have to torture everybody at Court; and weariness is the punishment of sloth. But lust is a different thing altogether; my chaste soul could not forgive

such a sin, and I declare open war against it. My subjects are at liberty to think women handsome as much as they please; women may do all in their power to appear beautiful; people may entertain each other as they like, because I cannot forbid conversation; but they shall not gratify desires on which the preservation of the human race depends, unless it is in the holy state of legal marriage. Therefore, all the miserable creatures who live by the barter of their caresses and of the charms given to them by nature shall be sent to Temeswar. I am aware that in Rome people are very indulgent on that point, and that, in order to prevent another greater crime (which is not prevented), every cardinal has one or more mistresses, but in Rome the climate requires certain concessions which are not necessary here, where the bottle and the pipe replace all pleasures. (She might have added, *and the table*, for the Austrians are known to be terrible eaters.)

"I will have no indulgence either for domestic disorders, for the moment I hear that a wife is unfaithful to her husband, I will have her locked up, in spite of all, in spite of the generally received opinion that the husband is the real judge and master of his wife; that privilege cannot be granted in my kingdom where husbands are by far too indifferent on that subject. Fanatic husbands may complain as much as they please that I dishonour them by punishing their wives; they are dis-

honoured already by the fact of the woman's infidelity."

"But, madam, dishonour rises in reality only from the fact of infidelity being made public; besides, you might be deceived, although you are empress."

"I know that, but that is no business of yours, and I do not grant you the right of contradicting me."

Such is the way in which Maria Teresa would have argued, and notwithstanding the principle of virtue from which her argument had originated, it had ultimately given birth to all the infamous deeds which her executioners, the Commissaries of Chastity, committed with impunity under her name. At every hour of the day, in all the streets of Vienna, they carried off and took to prison the poor girls who happened to live alone, and very often went out only to earn an honest living. I should like to know how it was possible to know that a girl was going to some man to get from him consolations for her miserable position, or that she was in search of someone disposed to offer her those consolations? Indeed, it was difficult. A spy would follow them at a distance. The police department kept a crowd of those spies, and as the scoundrels wore no particular uniform, it was impossible to know them; as a natural consequence, there was a general distrust of all strangers. If a girl entered a house, the spy

who had followed her, waited for her, stopped her as she came out, and subjected her to an interrogatory. If the poor creature looked uneasy, if she hesitated in answering in such a way as to satisfy the spy, the fellow would take her to prison; in all cases beginning by plundering her of whatever money or jewellery she carried about her person, and the restitution of which could never be obtained. Vienna was, in that respect a true den of privileged thieves. It happened to me one day in Leopoldstadt that in the midst of some tumult a girl slipped in my hand a gold watch to secure it from the clutches of a police-spy who was pressing upon her to take her up. I did not know the poor girl, whom I was fortunate enough to see again one month afterwards. She was pretty, and she had been compelled to more than one sacrifice in order to obtain her liberty. I was glad to be able to hand her watch back to her, and although she was well worthy of a man's attention I did not ask her for anything to reward my faithfulness. The only way in which girls could walk unmolested in the streets was to go about with their head bent down with beads in hand, for in that case the disgusting brood of spies dared not arrest them, because they might be on their way to church, and Maria Teresa would certainly have sent to the gallows the spy guilty of such a mistake.

Those low villains rendered a stay in Vienna

very unpleasant to foreigners, and it was a matter of the greatest difficulty to gratify the slightest natural want without running the risk of being annoyed. One day as I was standing close to the wall in a narrow street, I was much astonished at hearing myself rudely addressed by a scoundrel with a round wig, who told me that, if I did not go somewhere else to finish what I had begun, he would have me arrested!

"And why, if you please?"

"Because, on your left, there is a woman who can see you."

I lifted up my head, and I saw on the fourth story, a woman who, with the telescope she had applied to her eye, could have told whether I was a Jew or a Christian. I obeyed, laughing heartily, and related the adventure everywhere; but no one was astonished, because the same thing happened over and over again every day.

In order to study the manners and habits of the people, I took my meals in all sorts of places. One day, having gone with Campioni to dine at "The Crawfish," I found, to my great surprise, sitting at the *table d'hôte,* that Pepe il Cadetto, whose acquaintance I had made at the time of my arrest in the Spanish army, and whom I had met afterwards in Venice and in Lyons, under the name of Don Joseph Marcati. Campioni, who had been his partner in Lyons, embraced him, talked with him in private, and informed me that the man had

resumed his real name, and that he was now called Count Afflisio. He told me that after dinner there would be a faro bank in which I would have an interest, and he therefore requested me not to play. I accepted the offer. Afflisio won: a captain of the name of Beccaria threw the cards at his face—a trifle to which the self-styled count was accustomed, and which did not elicit any remark from him. When the game was over, we repaired to the coffee-room, where an officer of gentlemanly appearance, staring at me, began to smile, but not in an offensive manner.

"Sir," I asked him, politely, "may I ask why you are laughing?"

"It makes me laugh to see that you do not recognize me."

"I have some idea that I have seen you somewhere, but I could not say where or when I had that honour."

"Nine years ago, by the orders of the Prince de Lobkowitz, I escorted you to the Gate of Rimini."

"You are Baron Vais."

"Precisely."

We embraced one another; he offered me his friendly services, promising to procure me all the pleasure he could in Vienna. I accepted gratefully, and the same evening he presented me to a countess, at whose house I made the acquaintance of the Abbé Testagrossa, who was called *Grosse-Tête* by everybody. He was minister of the Duke of

Modena, and great at Court because he had negotiated the marriage of the arch-duke with Béatrice d'Este. I also became acquainted there with the Count of Roquendorf and Count Sarotin, and with several noble young ladies who are called in Germany *fräuleins,* and with a baroness who had led a pretty wild life, but who could yet captivate a man. We had supper, and I was created *baron.* It was in vain that I observed that I had no title whatever: "You must be something," I was told, "and you cannot be less than *baron.* You must confess yourself to be at least that, if you wish to be received anywhere in Vienna."

"Well, I will be a baron, since it is of no importance."

The baroness was not long before she gave me to understand that she felt kindly disposed towards me, and that she would receive my attentions with pleasure; I paid her a visit the very next day. "If you are fond of cards," she said, "come in the evening." At her house I made the acquaintance of several gamblers, and of three or four *fräuleins* who, without any dread of the Commissaries of Chastity, were devoted to the worship of Venus, and were so kindly disposed that they were not afraid of lowering their nobility by accepting some reward for their kindness—a circumstance which proved to me that the Commissaries were in the habit of troubling only the girls who did not frequent good houses.

The baroness invited me to introduce all my friends, so I brought to her house Vais, Campioni, and Afflisio. The last one played, held the bank, won, and Tramontini, with whom I had become acquainted, presented him to his wife, who was called Madame Tasi. It was through her that Afflisio made the useful acquaintance of the Prince of Saxe-Hildburghausen. This introduction was the origin of the great fortune made by that contrabrand count, because Tramontini, who had become his partner in all important gambling transactions, contrived to obtain for him from the prince the rank of captain in the service of their imperial and royal majesties, and in less than three weeks Afflisio wore the uniform and the insignia of his grade. When I left Vienna he possessed one hundred thousand florins. Their majesties were fond of gambling but not of punting. The emperor had a creature of his own to hold the bank. He was a kind, magnificent, but not extravagant, prince. I saw him in his grand imperial costume, and I was surprised to see him dressed in the Spanish fashion. I almost fancied I had before my eyes Charles V. of Spain, who had established that etiquette which was still in existence, although after him no emperor had been a Spaniard, and although Francis I. had nothing in common with that nation.

In Poland, some years afterwards, I saw the same caprice at the coronation of Stanislas Augustus

Poniatowski, and the old palatine noblemen almost broke their hearts at the sight of that costume; but they had to shew as good a countenance as they could, for under Russian despotism the only privilege they enjoyed was that of resignation.

The Emperor Francis I. was handsome, and would have looked so under the hood of a monk as well as under an imperial crown. He had every possible consideration for his wife, and allowed her to get the state into debt, because he possessed the art of becoming himself the creditor of the state. He favoured commerce because it filled his coffers. He was rather addicted to gallantry, and the empress, who always called him master, feigned not to notice it, because she did not want the world to know that her charms could no longer captivate her royal spouse, and the more so that the beauty of her numerous family was generally admired. All the archduchesses except the eldest seemed to me very handsome; but amongst the sons I had the opportunity of seeing only the eldest, and I thought the expression of his face bad and unpleasant, in spite of the contrary opinion of Abbé Grosse-Tête, who prided himself upon being a good physiognomist.

"What do you see," he asked me one day, "on the countenance of that prince?"

"Self-conceit and suicide."

It was a prophecy, for Joseph II. positively killed himself, although not wilfully, and it was his self-conceit which prevented him from knowing it.

He was not wanting in learning, but the knowledge which he believed himself to possess destroyed the learning which he had in reality. He delighted in speaking to those who did not know how to answer him, whether because they were amazed at his arguments, or because they pretended to be so; but he called pedants, and avoided all persons, who by true reasoning pulled down the weak scaffolding of his arguments. Seven years ago I happened to meet him at Luxemburg, and he spoke to me with just contempt of a man who had exchanged immense sums of money, and a great deal of debasing meanness against some miserable parchments, and he added,—

"I despise men who purchase nobility."

"Your majesty is right, but what are we to think of those who sell it?"

After that question he turned his back upon me, and hence forth he thought me unworthy of being spoken to.

The great passion of that king was to see those who listened to him laugh, whether with sincerity or with affectation, when he related something; he could narrate well and amplify in a very amusing manner all the particulars of an anecdote; but he called anyone who did not laugh at his jests a fool, and that was always the person who understood him best. He gave the preference to the opinion of Brambilla, who encouraged his suicide, over that of the physicians who were directing him according to

reason. Nevertheless, no one ever denied his claim to great courage; but he had no idea whatever of the art of government, for he had not the slightest knowledge of the human heart, and he could neither dissemble nor keep a secret; he had so little control over his own countenance that he could not even conceal the pleasure he felt in punishing, and when he saw anyone whose features did not please him, he could not help making a wry face which disfigured him greatly.

Joseph II. sank under a truly cruel disease, which left him until the last moment the faculty of arguing upon everything, at the same time that he knew his death to be certain. This prince must have felt the misery of repenting everything he had done and of seeing the impossibility of undoing it, partly because it was irreparable, partly because if he had undone through reason what he had done through senselessness, he would have thought himself dishonoured, for he must have clung to the last to the belief of the infallibility attached to his high birth, in spite of the state of languor of his soul which ought to have proved to him the weakness and the fallibility of his nature. He had the greatest esteem for his brother, who has now succeeded him, but he had not the courage to follow the advice which that brother gave him. An impulse worthy of a great soul made him bestow a large reward upon the physician, a man of intelligence, who pronounced his sentence of death, but a

completely opposite weakness had prompted him, a few months before, to load with benefits the doctors and the quack who made him believe that they had cured him. He must likewise have felt the misery of knowing that he would not be regretted after his death—a grievous thought, especially for a sovereign. His niece, whom he loved dearly, died before him, and, if he had had the affection of those who surrounded him, they would have spared him that fearful information, for it was evident that his end was near at hand, and no one could dread his anger for having kept that event from him.

Although very much pleased with Vienna and with the pleasures I enjoyed with the beautiful *fräuleins,* whose acquaintance I had made at the house of the baroness, I was thinking of leaving that agreeable city, when Baron Vais, meeting me at Count Durazzo's wedding, invited me to join a picnic at Schœnbrunn. I went, and I failed to observe the laws of temperance; the consequence was that I returned to Vienna with such a severe indigestion that in twenty-four hours I was at the point of death.

I made use of the last particle of intelligence left in me by the disease to save my own life. Campioni, Roquendorf and Sarotin were by my bedside. M. Sarotin, who felt great friendship for me, had brought a physician, although I had almost positively declared that I would not see one. That disciple of Sangrado, thinking that he could allow

full sway to the despotism of science, had sent for a surgeon, and they were going to bleed me against my will. I was half-dead; I do not know by what strange inspiration I opened my eyes, and I saw a man, standing lancet in hand and preparing to open the vein.

"No, no!" I said.

And I languidly withdrew my arm; but the tormentor wishing, as the physician expressed it, to restore me to life in spite of myself, got hold of my arm again. I suddenly felt my strength returning. I put my hand forward, seized one of my pistols, fired, and the ball cut off one of the locks of his hair. That was enough; everybody ran away, with the exception of my servant, who did not abandon me, and gave me as much water as I wanted to drink. On the fourth day I had recovered my usual good health.

That adventure amused all the idlers of Vienna for several days, and Abbé Grosse-Tête assured me that if I had killed the poor surgeon, it would not have gone any further, because all the witnesses present in my room at the time would have declared that he wanted to use violence to bleed me, which made it a case of legitimate self-defence. I was likewise told by several persons that all the physicians in Vienna were of opinion that if I had been bled I should have been a dead man; but if drinking water had not saved me, those gentlemen would certainly not have expressed the same

opinion. I felt, however, that I had to be careful, and not to fall ill in the capital of Austria, for it was likely that I should not have found a physician without difficulty. At the opera, a great many persons wished after that to make my acquaintance, and I was looked upon as a man who had fought, pistol in hand, against death. A miniature-painter named Morol, who was subject to indigestions and who was at last killed by one, had taught me his system which was that, to cure those attacks, all that was necessary was to drink plenty of water and to be patient. He died because he was bled once when he could not oppose any resistance.

My indigestion reminded me of a witty saying of a man who was not much in the habit of uttering many of them; I mean M. de Maisonrouge, who was taken home one day almost dying from a severe attack of indigestion: his carriage having been stopped opposite the *Quinze-Vingts* by some obstruction, a poor man came up and begged alms, saying,—

"Sir, I am starving."

"Eh! what are you complaining of?" answered Maisonrouge, sighing deeply; "I wish I was in your place, you rogue!"

At that time I made the acquaintance of a Milanese dancer, who had wit, excellent manners, a literary education, and what is more—great beauty. She received very good society, and did

the honours of her drawing-room marvellously well. I became acquainted at her house with Count Christopher Erdodi, an amiable, wealthy and generous man; and with a certain Prince Kinski who had all the grace of a harlequin. That girl inspired me with love, but it was in vain, for she was herself enamoured of a dancer from Florence, called Argiolini. I courted her, but she only laughed at me, for an actress, if in love with someone, is a fortress which cannot be taken, unless you build a bridge of gold, and I was not rich. Yet I did not despair, and kept on burning my incense at her feet. She liked my society because she used to shew me the letters she wrote, and I was very careful to admire her style. She had her own portrait in miniature, which was an excellent likeness. The day before my departure, vexed at having lost my time and my amorous compliments, I made up my mind to steal that portrait—a slight compensation for not having won the original. As I was taking leave of her, I saw the portrait within my reach, seized it, and left Vienna for Presburg, where Baron Vais had invited me to accompany him and several lovely *fräuleins* on a party of pleasure.

When we got out of the carriages, the first person I tumbled upon was the Chevalier de Talvis, the protector of Madame Condé-Labre, whom I had treated so well in Paris. The moment he saw me, he came up and told me that I owed him his revenge.

"I promise to give it to you, but I never leave one pleasure for another," I answered; "we shall see one another again."

"That is enough. Will you do me the honour to introduce me to these ladies?"

"Very willingly, but not in the street."

We went inside of the hotel and he followed us. Thinking that the man, who after all was as brave as a French chevalier, might amuse us, I presented him to my friends. He had been staying at the same hotel for a couple of days, and he was in mourning. He asked us if we intended to go to the prince-bishop's ball; it was the first news we had of it. Vais answered affirmatively.

"One can attend it," said Talvis, "without being presented, and that is why we intend to go, for I am not known to anybody here."

He left us, and the landlord, having come in to receive our orders, gave us some particulars respecting the ball. Our lovely *fräulcins* expressing a wish to attend it, we made up our minds to gratify them.

We were not known to anyone, and were rambling through the apartments, when we arrived before a large table at which the prince-bishop was holding a faro bank. The pile of gold that the noble prelate had before him could not have been less than thirteen or fourteen thousand florins. The Chevalier de Talvis was standing between two ladies to whom he was whispering sweet words,

while the prelate was shuffling the cards. The prince, looking at the chevalier, took it into his head to ask him, in a most engaging manner to risk a card.

"Willingly, my lord," said Talvis; "the whole of the bank upon this card."

"Very well," answered the prelate, to shew that he was not afraid.

He dealt, Talvis won, and my lucky Frenchman, with the greatest coolness, filled his pockets with the prince's gold. The bishop, astonished, and seeing but rather late how foolish he had been, said to the chevalier,—

"Sir, if you had lost, how would you have managed to pay me?"

"My lord, that is my business."

"You are more lucky than wise."

"Most likely, my lord; but that is my business."

Seeing that the chevalier was on the point of leaving, I followed him, and at the bottom of the stairs, after congratulating him, I asked him to lend me a hundred sovereigns. He gave them to me at once, assuring me that he was delighted to have it in his power to oblige me.

"I will give you my bill."

"Nothing of the sort."

I put the gold into my pocket, caring very little for the crowd of masked persons whom curiosity had brought around the lucky winner, and who had

witnessed the transaction. Talvis went away, and I returned to the ball-room.

Roquendorf and Sarotin, who were amongst the guests, having heard that the chevalier had handed me some gold, asked me who he was. I gave them an answer half true and half false, and I told them that the gold I had just received was the payment of a sum I had lent him in Paris. Of course they could not help believing me, or at least pretending to do so.

When we returned to the inn, the landlord informed us that the chevalier had left the city on horseback, as fast as he could gallop, and that a small travelling-bag was all his luggage. We sat down to supper, and in order to make our meal more cheerful, I told Vais and our charming *fräuleins* the manner in which I had known Talvis, and how I had contrived to have my share of what he had won.

On our arrival in Vienna, the adventure was already known; people admired the Frenchman and laughed at the bishop. I was not spared by public rumour, but I took no notice of it, for I did not think it necessary to defend myself. No one knew the Chevalier de Talvis, and the French ambassador was not even acquainted with his name. I do not know whether he was ever heard of again.

I left Vienna in a post-chaise, after I had said farewell to my friends, ladies and gentlemen, and on the fourth day I slept in Trieste. The next day I sailed for Venice, which I reached in the

afternoon, two days before Ascension Day. After an absence of three years I had the happiness of embracing my beloved protector, M. de Bragadin, and his two inseparable friends, who were delighted to see me in good health and well equipped.

CHAPTER XI

I RETURN THE PORTRAIT I HAD STOLEN IN VIENNA —I PROCEED TO PADUA; AN ADVENTURE ON MY WAY BACK, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES—I MEET THÉRÈSE IMER AGAIN—MY ACQUAINTANCE WITH MADEMOISELLE C. C.

I FOUND myself again in my native country with that feeling of delight which is experienced by all true-hearted men, when they see again the place in which they have received the first lasting impressions. I had acquired some experience; I knew the laws of honour and politeness; in one word, I felt myself superior to most of my equals, and I longed to resume my old habits and pursuits; but I intended to adopt a more regular and more reserved line of conduct.

I saw with great pleasure, as I entered my study, the perfect *statu quo* which had been preserved there. My papers, covered with a thick layer of dust, testified well enough that no strange hand had ever meddled with them.

Two days after my arrival, as I was getting

ready to accompany the Bucentoro, on which the Doge was going, as usual, to wed the Adriatic, the widow of so many husbands, and yet as young as on the first day of her creation, a gondolier brought me a letter. It was from M. Giovanni Grimani, a young nobleman, who, well aware that he had no right to command me, begged me in the most polite manner to call at his house to receive a letter which had been entrusted to him for delivery in my own hands. I went to him immediately, and after the usual compliments he handed me a letter with a flying seal, which he had received the day before.

Here are the contents:

"Sir, having made a useless search for my portrait after you left, and not being in the habit of receiving thieves in my apartment, I feel satisfied that it must be in your possession. I request you to deliver it to the person who will hand you this letter.

"Fogliazzi."

Happening to have the portrait with me, I took it out of my pocket, and gave it at once to M. Grimani, who received it with a mixture of satisfaction and surprise, for he had evidently thought that the commission entrusted to him would be more difficult to fulfil, and he remarked,—

"Love has most likely made a thief of you but I congratulate you, for your passion cannot be a very ardent one."

"How can you judge of that?"

"From the readiness with which you give up this portrait."

"I would not have given it up so easily to anybody else."

"I thank you; and as a compensation I beg you to accept my friendship."

"I place it in my estimation infinitely above the portrait, and even above the original. May I ask you to forward my answer?"

"I promise you to send it. Here is some paper, write your letter; you need not seal it."

I wrote the following words:

"In getting rid of the portrait, Casanova experiences a satisfaction by far superior to that which he felt when, owing to a stupid fancy, he was foolish enough to put it in his pocket."

Bad weather having compelled the authorities to postpone the wonderful wedding until the following Sunday, I accompanied M. de Bragadin, who was going to Padua. The amiable old man ran away from the noisy pleasures which no longer suited his age, and he was going to spend in peace the few days which the public rejoicings would have rendered unpleasant for him in Venice. On the following Saturday, after dinner, I bade him farewell, and got into the post-chaise to return to Venice. If I had left Padua two minutes sooner or later, the whole course of my life would have been altered, and my destiny, if destiny is truly shaped by fatal combinations, would have been very

different. But the reader can judge for himself.

Having, therefore, left Padua at the very instant marked by fatality, I met at Oriago a cabriolet, drawn at full speed by two post-horses, containing a very pretty woman and a man wearing a German uniform. Within a few yards from me the vehicle was suddenly upset on the side of the river, and the woman, falling over the officer, was in great danger of rolling into the Brenta. I jumped out of my chaise without even stopping my postillion, and rushing to the assistance of the lady I remedied with a chaste hand the disorder caused to her toilet by her fall.

Her companion, who had picked himself up without any injury, hastened towards us, and there was the lovely creature sitting on the ground thoroughly amazed, and less confused from her fall than from the indiscretion of her petticoats, which had exposed in all their nakedness certain parts which an honest woman never shews to a stranger. In the warmth of her thanks, which lasted until her postillion and mine had righted the cabriolet, she often called me her saviour, her guardian angel.

The vehicle being all right, the lady continued her journey towards Padua, and I resumed mine towards Venice, which I reached just in time to dress for the opera.

The next day I masked myself early to accompany the Bucentoro, which, favoured by fine weather, was to be taken to the Lido for the great

and ridiculous ceremony. The whole affair is under the responsibility of the admiral of the arsenal, who answers for the weather remaining fine, under penalty of his head, for the slightest contrary wind might capsize the ship and drown the Doge, with all the most serene noblemen, the ambassadors, and the Pope's nuncio, who is the sponsor of that burlesque wedding which the Venetians respect even to superstition. To crown the misfortune of such an accident it would make the whole of Europe laugh, and people would not fail to say that the Doge of Venice had gone at last to consumate his marriage.

I had removed my mask, and was drinking some coffee under the *procuraties* of St. Mark's Square, when a fine-looking female mask struck me gallantly on the shoulder with her fan. As I did not know who she was I did not take much notice of it, and after I had finished my coffee I put on my mask and walked towards the Spiaggia del Sepulcro, where M. de Bragadin's gondola was waiting for me. As I was getting near the Ponte del Paglia I saw the same masked woman attentively looking at some wonderful monster shewn for a few pence. I went up to her, and asked her why she had struck me with her fan.

"To punish you for not knowing me again after having saved my life."

I guessed that she was the person I had rescued the day before on the banks of the Brenta,

and after paying her some compliments I enquired whether she intended to follow the Bucentoro.

"I should like it," she said, "if I had a safe gondola."

I offered her mine, which was one of the largest, and, after consulting a masked person who accompanied her, she accepted. Before stepping in I invited them to take off their masks, but they told me that they wished to remain unknown. I then begged them to tell me if they belonged to the suite of some ambassador, because in that case I should be compelled, much to my regret, to withdraw my invitation; but they assured me that they were both Venetians. The gondola belonging to a patrician, I might have committed myself with the State Inquisitors—a thing which I wished particularly to avoid.

We were following the Bucentoro, and seated near the lady I allowed myself a few slight liberties, but she foiled my intentions by changing her seat. After the ceremony we returned to Venice, and the officer who accompanied the lady told me that I would oblige them by dining in their company at "The Savage." I accepted, for I felt somewhat curious about the woman. What I had seen of her at the time of her fall warranted my curiosity. The officer left me alone with her, and went before us to order dinner.

As soon as I was alone with her, emboldened by the mask, I told her that I was in love with her,

that I had a box at the opera, which I placed entirely at her disposal, and that, if she would only give me the hope that I was not wasting my time and my attentions, I would remain her humble servant during the carnival.

"If you mean to be cruel," I added, "pray say so candidly."

"I must ask you tell me what sort of a woman you take me for?"

"For a very charming one, whether a princess or a maid of low degree. Therefore, I hope that you will give me, this very day, some marks of your kindness, or I must part with you immediately after dinner."

"You will do as you please; but I trust that after dinner you will have changed your opinion and your language, for your way of speaking is not pleasant. It seems to me that, before venturing upon such an explanation, it is necessary to know one another. Do you not think so?"

"Yes, I do; but I am afraid of being deceived."

"How very strange! And that fear makes you begin by what ought to be the end?"

"I only beg to-day for one encouraging word. Give it to me and I will at once be modest, obedient and discreet."

"Pray calm yourself."

We found the officer waiting for us before the door of "The Savage," and went upstairs. The moment we were in the room, she took off her

mask, and I thought her more beautiful than the day before. I wanted only to ascertain, for the sake of form and etiquette, whether the officer was her husband, her lover, a relative or a protector, because, used as I was to gallant adventures, I wished to know the nature of the one in which I was embarking.

We sat down to dinner, and the manners of the gentleman and of the lady made it necessary for me to be careful. It was to him that I offered my box, and it was accepted; but as I had none, I went out after dinner under pretence of some engagement, in order to get one at the opera-buffa, where Petrici and Lasqui were then the shining stars. After the opera I gave them a good supper at an inn, and I took them to their house in my gondola. Thanks to the darkness of the night, I obtained from the pretty woman all the favours which can be granted by the side of a third person who has to be treated with caution. As we parted company, the officer said,——

"You shall hear from me to morrow."

"Where, and how?"

"Never mind that."

The next morning the servant announced an officer; it was my man. After we had exchanged the usual compliments, after I had thanked him for the honour he had done me the day before, I asked him to tell me his name. He answered me in the

following manner, speaking with great fluency, but without looking at me:

"My name is P—— C——. My father is rich, and enjoys great consideration at the exchange; but we are not on friendly terms at present. I reside in St. Mark's Square. The lady you saw with me was a Mdlle. O——; she is the wife of the broker C——, and her sister married the patrician P—— M——. But Madame C—— is at variance with her husband on my account, as she is the cause of my quarrel with my father.

"I wear this uniform in virtue of a captaincy in the Austrian service, but I have never served in reality. I have the contract for the supply of oxen to the City of Venice, and I get the cattle from Styria and Hungary. This contract gives me a net profit of ten thousand florins a year; but an unforeseen embarrassment, which I must remedy; a fraudulent bankruptcy, and some extraordinary expenditure, place me for the present in monetary difficulties. Four years ago I heard a great deal about you, and wished very much to make your acquaintance; I firmly believe that it was through the interference of Heaven that we became acquainted the day before yesterday. I have no hesitation in claiming from you an important service which will unite us by the ties of the warmest friendship. Come to my assistance without running any risk yourself; back these three bills of exchange. You need not be afraid of having to

pay them, for I will leave in your hands these three other bills which fall due before the first. Besides, I will give you a mortgage upon the proceeds of my contract during the whole year, so that, should I fail to take up these bills, you could seize my cattle in Trieste, which is the only road through which they can come."

Astonished at his speech and at his proposal, which seemed to me a lure and made me fear a world of trouble which I always abhorred, struck by the strange idea of that man who, thinking that I would easily fall into the snare, gave me the preference over so many other persons whom he certainly knew better than me, I did not hesitate to tell him that I would never accept his offer. He then had recourse to all his eloquence to persuade me, but I embarrassed him greatly by telling him how surprised I was at his giving me the preference over all his other acquaintances, when I had had the honour to know him only for two days.

"Sir," he said, with barefaced impudence, "having recognized in you a man of great intelligence, I felt certain that you would at once see the advantages of my offer, and that you would not raise any objection."

"You must see your mistake by this time, and most likely you will take me for a fool now you see that I should believe myself a dupe if I accepted."

He left me with an apology for having troubled

me, and saying that he hoped to see me in the evening at St. Mark's Square, where he would be with Madame C——, he gave me his address, telling me that he had retained possession of his apartment unknown to his father. This was as much as to say that he expected me to return his visit, but if I had been prudent I should not have done so.

Disgusted at the manner in which that man had attempted to get hold of me, I no longer felt any inclination to try my fortune with his mistress, for it seemed evident that they were conspiring together to make a dupe of me, and as I had no wish to afford them that gratification I avoided them in the evening. It would have been wise to keep to that line of conduct; but the next day, obeying my evil genius, and thinking that a polite call could not have any consequences, I called upon him.

A servant having taken me to his room, he gave me the most friendly welcome, and reproached me in a friendly manner for not having shewn myself the evening before. After that, he spoke again of his affairs, and made me look at a heap of papers and documents; I found it very wearisome.

"If you make up your mind to sign the three bills of exchange," he said, "I will take you as a partner in my contract."

By this extraordinary mark of friendship, he

was offering me—at least he said so—an income of five thousand florins a year; but my only answer was to beg that the matter should never be mentioned again. I was going to take leave of him, when he said that he wished to introduce me to his mother and sister.

He left the room, and came back with them. The mother was a respectable, simple-looking woman, but the daughter was a perfect beauty; she literally dazzled me. After a few minutes, the over-trustful mother begged leave to retire, and her daughter remained. In less than half an hour I was captivated; her perfection delighted me; her lively wit, her artless reasoning, her candour, her ingenuousness, her natural and noble feelings, her cheerful and innocent quickness, that harmony which arises from beauty, wit, and innocence, and which had always the most powerful influence over me—everything in fact conspired to make me the slave of the most perfect woman that the wildest dreams could imagine.

Mdlle. C—— C—— never went out without her mother who, although very pious, was full of kind indulgence. She read no books but her father's—a serious man who had no novels in his library, and she was longing to read some tales of romance. She had likewise a great wish to know Venice, and as no one visited the family she had never been told that she was truly a prodigy of beauty. Her brother was writing while I conversed with her,

or rather answered all the questions which she addressed to me, and which I could only satisfy by developing the ideas that she already had, and that she was herself amazed to find in her own mind, for her soul had until then been unconscious of its own powers. Yet I did not tell her that she was lovely and that she interested me in the highest degree, because I had so often said the same to other women, and without truth, that I was afraid of raising her suspicions.

I left the house with a sensation of dreamy sadness; feeling deeply moved by the rare qualities I had discovered in that charming girl, I promised myself not to see her again, for I hardly thought myself the man to sacrifice my liberty entirely and to ask her in marriage, although I certainly believed her endowed with all the qualities necessary to minister to my happiness.

I had not seen Madame Manzoni since my return to Venice, and I went to pay her a visit. I found the worthy woman the same as she had always been towards me, and she gave me the most affectionate welcome. She told me that Thérèse Imer, that pretty girl who had caused M. de Malipiero to strike me thirteen years before, had just returned from Bayreuth, where the margrave had made her fortune. As she lived in the house opposite, Madame Manzoni, who wanted to enjoy her surprise, sent her word to come over. She came almost immediately, holding by the hand

a little boy of eight years—a lovely child—and the only one she had given to her husband, who was a dancer in Bayreuth. Our surprise at seeing one another again was equal to the pleasure we experienced in recollecting what had occurred in our young days; it is true that we had but trifles to recollect. I congratulated her upon her good fortune, and judging of my position from external appearances, she thought it right to congratulate me, but her fortune would have been established on a firmer basis than mine if she had followed a prudent line of conduct. She unfortunately indulged in numerous caprices with which my readers will become acquainted. She was an excellent musician, but her fortune was not altogether owing to her talent; her charms had done more for her than anything else. She told me her adventures, very likely with some restrictions, and we parted after a conversation of two hours. She invited me to breakfast for the following day. She told me that the margrave had her narrowly watched, but being an old acquaintance I was not likely to give rise to any suspicion; that is the aphorism of all women addicted to gallantry. She added that I could, if I liked, see her that same evening in her box, and that M. Papafava, who was her god-father, would be glad to see me. I called at her house early the next morning, and I found her in bed with her son, who, thanks to the principles in which he had been educated, got up

and left the room as soon as he saw me seated near his mother's bed. I spent three hours with her, and I recollect that the last was delightful; the reader will know the consequence of that pleasant hour later. I saw her a second time during the fortnight she passed in Venice, and when she left I promised to pay her a visit in Bayreuth, but I never kept my promise.

I had at that time to attend to the affairs of my posthumous brother, who had, as he said, a call from Heaven to the priesthood, but he wanted a patrimony. Although he was ignorant and devoid of any merit save a handsome face, he thought that an ecclesiastical career would insure his happiness, and he depended a great deal upon his preaching, for which, according to the opinion of the women with whom he was acquainted, he had a decided talent. I took everything into my hands, and I succeeded in obtaining for him a patrimony from M. Grimani, who still owed us the value of the furniture in my father's house, of which he had never rendered any account. He transferred to him a life-interest in a house in Venice, and two years afterwards my brother was ordained. But the patrimony was only fictitious, the house being already mortgaged; the Abbé Grimani was, however, a kind of Jesuit, and those sainted servants of God think that all is well that ends well and profitably to themselves. I shall speak again of my unhappy brother whose destiny became involved with mine.

Two days had passed since I had paid my visit to P—— C——, when I met him in the street. He told me that his sister was constantly speaking of me, that she quoted a great many things which I had told her, and that his mother was much pleased at her daughter having made my acquaintance. "She would be a good match for you," he added, "for she will have a dowry of ten thousand ducats. If you will call on me to-morrow, we will take coffee with my mother and sister."

I had promised myself never again to enter his house, but I broke my word. It is easy enough for a man to forget his promises under such circumstances.

I spent three hours in conversation with the charming girl and when I left her I was deeply in love. As I went away, I told her that I envied the destiny of the man who would have her for his wife, and my compliment, the first she had ever received, made her blush.

After I had left her I began to examine the nature of my feelings towards her, and they frightened me, for I could neither behave towards Mdlle. C—— C—— as an honest man nor as a libertine. I could not hope to obtain her hand, and I almost fancied I would stab anyone who advised me to seduce her. I felt that I wanted some diversion: I went to the gaming-table. Playing is sometimes an excellent lenitive to calm the mind, and to smother the ardent

fire of love. I played with wonderful luck, and I was going home with plenty of gold, when in a solitary narrow street I met a man bent down less by age than by the heavy weight of misery. As I came near him I recognized Count Bonafède, the sight of whom moved me with pity. He recognized me likewise. We talked for some time, and at last he told me the state of abject poverty to which he was reduced, and the great difficulty he had to keep his numerous family. "I do not blush," he added, "in begging from you one sequin which will keep us alive for five or six days." I immediately gave him ten, trying to prevent him from lowering himself in his anxiety to express his gratitude, but I could not prevent him from shedding tears. As we parted, he told me that what made him most miserable was to see the position of his daughter, who had become a great beauty, and would rather die than make a sacrifice of her virtue. "I can neither support her in those feelings," he said, with a sigh, "nor reward her for them."

Thinking that I understood the wishes with which misery had inspired him, I took his address, and promised to pay him a visit. I was curious to see what had become of a virtue of which I did not entertain a very high opinion. I called the next day. I found a house almost bare of furniture, and the daughter alone—a circumstance which did not astonish me. The young countess had seen me

arrive, and received me on the stairs in the most amiable manner. She was pretty well dressed, and I thought her handsome, agreeable, and lively, as she had been when I made her acquaintance in Fort St. André. Her father having announced my visit, she was in high spirits, and she kissed me with as much tenderness as if I had been a beloved lover. She took me to her own room, and after she had informed me that her mother was ill in bed and unable to see me, she gave way again to the transport of joy which, as she said, she felt in seeing me again. The ardour of our mutual kisses, given at first under the auspices of friendship, was not long in exciting our senses to such an extent that in less than a quarter of an hour I had nothing more to desire. When it was all over, it became us both, of course, to be, or at least to appear to be, surprised at what had taken place, and I could not honestly hesitate to assure the poor countess that it was only the first token of a constant and true love. She believed it, or she feigned to believe it, and perhaps I myself fancied it was true—for the moment. When we had become calm again, she told me the fearful state to which they were reduced, her brothers walking barefooted in the streets, and her father having positively no bread to give them.

"Then you have not any lover?"

"What! a lover! Where could I find a man courageous enough to be my lover in such a house

as this? Am I a woman to sell myself to the first comer for the sum of thirty sous? There is not a man in Venice who would think me worth more than that, seeing me in such a place as this. Besides, I was not born for prostitution."

Such a conversation was not very cheerful; she was weeping, and the spectacle of her sadness, joined to the picture of misery which surrounded me, was not at all the thing to excite love. I left her with a promise to call again, and I put twelve sequins in her hand. She was surprised at the amount; she had never known herself so rich before. I have always regretted I did not give her twice as much.

The next day P—— C—— called on me, and said cheerfully that his mother had given permission to her daughter to go to the opera with him, that the young girl was delighted because she had never been there before, and that, if I liked, I could wait for them at some place where they would meet me.

"But does your sister know that you intend me to join you?"

"She considers it a great pleasure."

"Does your mother know it?"

"No; but when she knows it she will not be angry, for she has a great esteem for you."

"In that case I will try to find a private box."

"Very well; wait for us at such a place."

The scoundrel did not speak of his letters of exchange again, and as he saw that I was no longer

paying my attentions to his mistress, and that I was in love with his sister, he had formed the fine project of selling her to me. I pitied the mother and the daughter who had confidence in such a man; but I had not the courage to resist the temptation. I even went so far as to persuade myself that as I loved her it was my duty to accept the offer, in order to save her from other snares; for if I had declined her brother might have found some other man less scrupulous, and I could not bear the idea. I thought that in my company her innocence ran no risk.

I took a box at the St. Samuel Opera, and I was waiting for them at the appointed place long before the time. They came at last, and the sight of my young friend delighted me. She was elegantly masked, and her brother wore his uniform. In order not to expose the lovely girl to being recognized on account of her brother, I made them get into my gondola. He insisted upon being landed near the house of his mistress, who was ill, he said, and he added that he would soon join us in our box. I was astonished that C—— C—— did not shew any surprise or repugnance at remaining alone with me in the gondola; but I did not think the conduct of her brother extraordinary, for it was evident that it was all arranged beforehand in his mind.

I told C—— C—— that we would remain in the gondola until the opening of the theatre, and

that as the heat was intense she would do well to take off her mask, which she did at once. The law I had laid upon myself to respect her, the noble confidence which was beaming on her countenance and in her looks, her innocent joy—everything increased the ardour of my love.

Not knowing what to say to her, for I could speak to her of nothing but love—and it was a delicate subject—I kept looking at her charming face, not daring to let my eyes rest upon two budding globes shaped by the Graces, for fear of giving the alarm to her modesty.

"Speak to me," she said at last; "you only look at me without uttering a single word. You have sacrificed yourself for me, because my brother would have taken you with him to his lady-love, who, to judge from what he says, must be as beautiful as an angel."

"I have seen that lady."

"I suppose she is very witty."

"She may be so; but I have no opportunity of knowing, for I have never visited her, and I do not intend ever to call upon her. Do not therefore imagine, beautiful C—— C——, that I have made the slightest sacrifice for your sake."

"I was afraid you had, because as you did not speak I thought you were sad."

"If I do not speak to you it is because I am too deeply moved by your angelic confidence in me."

"I am very glad it is so; but how could I not trust you? I feel much more free, much more confident with you than with my brother himself. My mother says it is impossible to be mistaken, and that you are certainly an honest man. Besides, you are not married; that is the first thing I asked my brother. Do you recollect telling me that you envied the fate of the man who would have me for his wife? Well, at that very moment I was thinking that your wife would be the happiest woman in Venice."

These words, uttered with the most candid artlessness, and with that tone of sincerity which comes from the heart, had upon me an effect which it would be difficult to describe; I suffered because I could not imprint the most loving kiss upon the sweet lips which had just pronounced them, but at the same time it caused me the most delicious felicity to see that such an angel loved me.

"With such conformity of feelings," I said, "we would, lovely C——, be perfectly happy, if we could be united for ever. But I am old enough to be your father."

"You my father? You are joking! Do you know that I am fourteen?"

"Do you know that I am twenty-eight?"

"Well, where can you see a man of your age having a daughter of mine? If my father were like you, he would certainly never frighten me; I could not keep anything from him."

The hour to go to the theatre had come; we landed, and the performance engrossed all her attention. Her brother joined us only when it was nearly over; it had certainly been a part of his calculation. I took them to an inn for supper, and the pleasure I experienced in seeing the charming girl eat with a good appetite made me forget that I had had no dinner. I hardly spoke during the supper, for love made me sick, and I was in a state of excitement which could not last long. In order to excuse my silence, I feigned to be suffering from the toothache.

After supper, P—— C—— told his sister that I was in love with her, and that I should certainly feel better if she would allow me to kiss her. The only answer of the innocent girl was to offer me her laughing lips, which seemed to call for kisses. I was burning; but my respect for that innocent and naïve young creature was such that I only kissed her cheek, and even that in a manner very cold in appearance.

"What a kiss!" exclaimed P—— C——. "Come, come, a good lover's kiss!"

I did not move; the impudent fellow annoyed me; but his sister, turning her head aside sadly, said,——

"Do not press him; I am not so happy as to please him."

That remark gave the alarm to my love; I could no longer master my feelings.

"What!" I exclaimed warmly, "what! beautiful C——, you do not condescend to ascribe my reserve to the feeling which you have inspired me with? You suppose that you do not please me? If a kiss is all that is needed to prove the contrary to you, oh! receive it now with all the sentiment that is burning in my heart!"

Then folding her in my arms, and pressing her lovingly against my breast, I imprinted on her mouth the long and ardent kiss which I had so much wished to give her; but the nature of that kiss made the timid dove feel that she had fallen into the vulture's claws. She escaped from my arms, amazed at having discovered my love in such a manner. Her brother expressed his approval, while she replaced her mask over her face, in order to conceal her confusion. I asked her whether she had any longer any doubts as to my love.

"You have convinced me," she answered, "but, because you have undeceived me, you must not punish me."

I thought that this was a very delicate answer, dictated by true sentiment; but her brother was not pleased with it, and said it was foolish

We put on our masks, left the inn, and after I had escorted them to their house I went home deeply in love, happy in my inmost soul, yet very sad.

The reader will learn in the following chapters the progress of my love and the adventures in which I found myself engaged.

CHAPTER XII

PROGRESS OF MY INTRIGUE WITH THE BEAUTIFUL C. C.

The next morning P—— C—— called on me with an air of triumph; he told me that his sister had confessed to her mother that we loved one another, and that if she was ever to be married she would be unhappy with any other husband.

"I adore your sister," I said to him; "but do you think that your father will be willing to give her to me?"

"I think not; but he is old. In the mean time, love one another. My mother has given her permission to go to the opera this evening with us."

"Very well, my dear friend, we must go."

"I find myself under the necessity of claiming a slight service at your hands."

"Dispose of me."

"There is some excellent Cyprus wine to be sold very cheap, and I can obtain a cask of it against my bill at six months. I am certain of

selling it again immediately with a good profit; but the merchant requires a guarantee, and he is disposed to accept yours, if you will give it. Will you be kind enough to endorse my note of hand?"

"With pleasure."

I signed my name without hesitation, for where is the man in love who in such a case would have refused that service to a person who to revenge himself might have made him miserable? We made an appointment for the evening, and parted highly pleased with each other.

After I had dressed myself, I went out and bought a dozen pairs of gloves, as many pairs of silk stockings, and a pair of garters embroidered in gold and with gold clasps, promising myself much pleasure in offering that first present to my young friend.

I need not say that I was exact in reaching the appointed place, but they were there already, waiting for me. Had I not suspected the intentions of P—— C——, their coming so early would have been very flattering to my vanity. The moment I had joined them, P—— C—— told me that, having other engagements to fulfil, he would leave his sister with me, and meet us at the theatre in the evening. When he had gone, I told C—— C—— that we would sail in a gondola until the opening of the theatre.

"No," she answered, "let us rather go to the Zuecca Garden."

"With all my heart."

I hired a gondola and we went to St. Blaze, where I knew a very pretty garden which, for one sequin, was placed at my disposal for the remainder of the day, with the express condition that no one else would be allowed admittance. We had not had any dinner, and after I had ordered a good meal we went up to a room where we took off our disguises and masks, after which we went to the garden.

My lovely C—— C—— had nothing on but a bodice made of light silk and a skirt of the same description, but she was charming in that simple costume! My amorous looks went through those light veils, and in my imagination I saw her entirely naked! I sighed with burning desires, with a mixture of discreet reserve and voluptuous love.

The moment we had reached the long avenue, my young companion, as lively as a fawn, finding herself at liberty on the green sward, and enjoying that happy freedom for the first time in her life, began to run about and to give way to the spirit of cheerfulness which was natural to her. When she was compelled to stop for want of breath, she burst out laughing at seeing me gazing at her in a sort of ecstatic silence. She then challenged me to run a race; the game was very agreeable to me. I accepted, but I proposed to make it interesting by a wager.

"Whoever loses the race," I said, "shall have to do whatever the winner asks."

"Agreed!"

We marked the winning-post, and made a fair start. I was certain to win, but I lost on purpose, so as to see what she would ask me to do. At first she ran with all her might while I reserved my strength, and she was the first to reach the goal. As she was trying to recover her breath, she thought of sentencing me to a good penance: she hid herself behind a tree and told me, a minute afterwards, that I had to find her ring. She had concealed it about her, and that was putting me in possession of all her person. I thought it was a delightful forfeit, for I could easily see that she had chosen it with intentional mischief; but I felt that I ought not to take too much advantage of her, because her artless confidence required to be encouraged. We sat on the grass, I visited her pockets, the folds of her stays, of her petticoat; then I looked in her shoes, and even at her garters which were fastened below the knees. Not finding anything, I kept on my search, and as the ring was about her, I was of course bound to discover it. My reader has most likely guessed that I had some suspicion of the charming hiding-place in which the young beauty had concealed the ring, but before coming to it I wanted to enjoy myself. The ring was at last found between the two most beautiful keepers that nature had ever rounded, but I felt such emotion as I drew it out that my hand was trembling.

"What are you trembling for?" she asked.

"Only for joy at having found the ring; you had concealed it so well! But you owe me a revenge, and this time you shall not beat me."

"We shall see."

We began a new race, and seeing that she was not running very fast, I thought I could easily distance her whenever I liked. I was mistaken. She had husbanded her strength, and when we had run about two-thirds of the race she suddenly sprang forward at full speed, left me behind, and I saw that I had lost. I then thought of a trick, the effect of which never fails; I feigned a heavy fall, and I uttered a shriek of pain. The poor child stopped at once, ran back to me in great fright, and, pitying me, she assisted me to raise myself from the ground. The moment I was on my feet again, I laughed heartily and, taking a spring forward, I had reached the goal long before her.

The charming runner, thoroughly amazed, said to me,——

"Then you did not hurt yourself?"

"No, for I fell purposely."

"Purposely? Oh, to deceive me! I would never have believed you capable of that. It is not fair to win by fraud; therefore I have not lost the race."

"Oh! yes, you have, for I reached the goal before you. Trick for trick; confess that you tried to deceive me at the start."

"But that is fair, and your trick is a very different thing."

"Yet it has given me the victory, and

Vincasi per fortuna o per ingano,
Il vincer sempre fu laudabil cosa."....

"I have often heard those words from my brother, but never from my father. Well, never mind, I have lost. Give your judgment now, I will obey."

"Wait a little. Let me see. Ah! my sentence is that you shall exchange your garters for mine."

"Exchange our garters! But you have seen mine, they are ugly and worth nothing."

"Never mind. Twice every day I shall think of the person I love, and as nearly as possible at the same hours you will have to think of me."

"It is a very pretty idea, and I like it. Now I forgive you for having deceived me. Here are my ugly garters. Ah! my dear deceiver, how beautiful yours are! What a handsome present! How they will please my mother! They must be a present which you have just received, for they are quite new."

"No, they have not been given to me. I bought them for you, and I have been racking my brain to find how I could make you accept them. Love suggested to me the idea of making them the prize of the race. You may now imagine my sorrow when I saw that you would win. Vexation inspired me with a deceitful stratagem which

arose from a feeling you had caused yourself, and which turned entirely to your honour, for you must admit that you would have shewn a very hard heart if you had not come to my assistance."

"And I feel certain that you would not have had recourse to that stratagem, if you could have guessed how deeply it would pain me."

"Do you then feel much interest in me?"

"I would do anything in the world to convince you of it. I like my pretty garters exceedingly; I will never have another pair, and I promise you that my brother shall not steal them from me."

"Can you suppose him capable of such an action?"

"Oh! certainly, especially if the fastenings are in gold."

"Yes, they are in gold; but let him believe that they are in gilt brass."

"Will you teach me how to fasten my beautiful garters?"

"Of course I will."

We went upstairs, and after our dinner which we both enjoyed with a good appetite, she became more lively and I more excited by love, but at the same time more to be pitied in consequence of the restraint to which I had condemned myself. Very anxious to try her garters, she begged me to help her, and that request was made in good faith, without mischievous coquetry. An innocent young girl, who, in spite of her fifteen years, has not loved yet, who has not frequented the society of

other girls, does not know the violence of amorous desires or what is likely to excite them. She has no idea of the danger of a *tête-à-tête*. When a natural instinct makes her love for the first time, she believes the object of her love worthy of her confidence, and she thinks that to be loved herself she must shew the most boundless trust.

Seeing that her stockings were too short to fasten the garter above the knee, she told me that she would in future use longer ones, and I immediately offered her those that I had purchased. Full of gratitude she sat on my knees, and in the effusion of her satisfaction she bestowed upon me all the kisses that she would have given to her father if he had made her such a present. I returned her kisses, forcibly keeping down the violence of my feelings. I only told her that one of her kisses was worth a kingdom. My charming C—— C—— took off her shoes and stockings, and put on one of the pairs I had given her, which went halfway up her thigh. The more innocent I found her to be, the less I could make up my mind to possess myself of that ravishing prey.

We returned to the garden, and after walking about until the evening we went to the opera, taking care to keep on our masks, because, the theatre being small, we might easily have been recognized, and my lovely friend was certain that her father would not allow her to come out again, if he found out that she had gone to the opera.

We were rather surprised not to see her brother. On our left we had the Marquis of Montalegre, the Spanish ambassador, with his acknowledged mistress, Mdlle. Bola, and in the box on our right a man and a woman who had not taken off their masks. Those two persons kept their eyes constantly fixed upon us, but my young friend did not remark it as her back was turned towards them. During the ballet, C—— C—— having left the libretto of the opera on the ledge of the box, the man with the mask stretched forth his hand and took it. That proved to me that we were known to him, and I said so to my companion, who turned round and recognized her brother. The lady who was with him could be no other than Madame C——. As P—— C—— knew the number of our box, he had taken the next one; he could not have done so without some intention, and I foresaw that he meant to make his sister have supper with that woman. I was much annoyed, but I could not prevent it without breaking off with him altogether, and I was in love.

After the second ballet, he came into our box with his lady, and after the usual exchange of compliments the acquaintance was made, and we had to accept supper at his casino. As soon as the two ladies had thrown off their masks, they embraced one another, and the mistress of P—— C—— overwhelmed my young friend with compliments and attentions. At table she affected

to treat her with extreme affability, and C—— C—— not having any experience of the world behaved towards her with the greatest respect. I could, however, see that C——, in spite of all her art, could hardly hide the vexation she felt at the sight of the superior beauty which I had preferred to her own charms. P—— C——, who was of an extravagant gaiety, launched forth in stupid jokes at which his mistress alone laughed; in my anger, I shrugged my shoulders, and his sister, not understanding his jests, took no notice of them. Altogether our *partie carrée* was not formed of congenial spirits, and was rather a dull affair.

As the dessert was placed on the table, P—— C——, somewhat excited by the wine he had drunk, kissed his lady-love, and challenged me to follow his example with his sister. I told him that I loved Mdlle. C—— C—— truly, and that I would not take such liberties with her until I should have acquired a legal right to her favours. P—— C—— began to scoff at what I had said, but C—— stopped him. Grateful for that mark of propriety, I took out of my pocket the twelve pairs of gloves which I had bought in the morning, and after I had begged her acceptance of half a dozen pairs I gave the other six to my young friend. P—— C—— rose from the table with a sneer, dragging along with him his mistress, who had likewise drunk rather freely, and he threw himself on a sofa with her. The scene taking a

lewd turn, I placed myself in such a manner as to hide them from the view of my young friend, whom I led into the recess of a window. But I had not been able to prevent C—— C—— from seeing in a looking-glass the position of the two impudent wretches, and her face was suffused with blushes; I, however, spoke to her quietly of indifferent things, and recovering her composure she answered me, speaking of her gloves, which she was folding on the pier-table. After his brutal exploit, P—— C—— came impudently to me and embraced me; his dissolute companion, imitating his example, kissed my young friend, saying she was certain that she had seen nothing. C—— C—— answered modestly that she did not know what she could have seen, but the look she cast towards me made me understand all she felt. If the reader has any knowledge of the human heart, he must guess what my feelings were. How was it possible to endure such a scene going on in the presence of an innocent girl whom I adored, when I had to fight hard myself with my own burning desires so as not to abuse her innocence! I was on a bed of thorns! Anger and indignation, restrained by the reserve I was compelled to adopt for fear of losing the object of my ardent love, made me tremble all over. The inventors of hell would not have failed to place that suffering among its torments, if they had known it. The lustful P—— C—— had thought of giving me a great proof of his friendship

by the disgusting action he had been guilty of, and he had reckoned as nothing the dishonour of his mistress, and the delicacy of his sister whom he had thus exposed to prostitution. I do not know how I contrived not to strangle him. The next day, when he called on me, I overwhelmed him with the most bitter reproaches, and he tried to excuse himself by saying that he never would have acted in that manner if he had not felt satisfied that I had already treated his sister in the *tête-à-tête* in the same way that he treated his mistress before us.

My love for C—— C—— became every instant more intense, and I had made up my mind to undertake everything necessary to save her from the fearful position in which her unworthy brother might throw her by selling her for his own profit to some man less scrupulous than I was. It seemed to me urgent. What a disgusting state of things! What an unheard-of species of seduction! What a strange way to gain my friendship! And I found myself under the dire necessity of dissembling with the man whom I despised most in the world! I had been told that he was deeply in debt, that he had been a bankrupt in Vienna, where he had a wife and a family of children, that in Venice he had compromised his father who had been obliged to turn him out of his house, and who, out of pity, pretended not to know that he had kept his room in it. He had

seduced his wife, or rather his mistress, who had been driven away by her husband, and after he had squandered everything she possessed, and he found himself at the end of his wits, he had tried to turn her prostitution to advantage. His poor mother who idolized him had given him everything she had, even her own clothes, and I expected him to plague me again for some loan or security, but I was firmly resolved on refusing. I could not bear the idea of C—— C—— being the innocent cause of my ruin, and used as a tool by her brother to keep up his disgusting life.

Moved by an irresistible feeling, by what is called perfect love, I called upon P—— C—— on the following day, and, after I had told him that I adored his sister with the most honourable intentions, I tried to make him realize how deeply he had grieved me by forgetting all respect, and that modesty which the most inveterate libertine ought never to insult if he has any pretension to be worthy of respectable society.

"Even if I had to give up," I added, "the pleasure of seeing your angelic sister, I have taken the firm resolution of not keeping company with you; but I candidly warn you that I will do everything in my power to prevent her from going out with you, and from being the victim of some infamous bargain in your hands."

He excused himself again by saying that he had drunk too much, and that he did not believe

that my love for his sister was such as to despise the gratification of my senses. He begged my pardon, he embraced me with tears in his eyes, and I would, perhaps have given way to my own emotion, when his mother and his sister entered the room. They offered me their heart-felt thanks for the handsome present I had given to the young lady. I told the mother that I loved her daughter, and that my fondest hope was to obtain her for my wife.

"In the hope of securing that happiness, madam," I added, "I shall get a friend to speak to your husband as soon as I shall have secured a position giving me sufficient means to keep her comfortably, and to assure her happiness."

So saying I kissed her hand, and I felt so deeply moved that the tears ran down my cheeks. Those tears were sympathetic, and the excellent woman was soon crying like me. She thanked me affectionately, and left me with her daughter and her son, who looked as if he had been changed into a statue.

There are a great many mothers of that kind in the world, and very often they are women who have led a virtuous life; they do not suppose that deceit can exist, because their own nature understands only what is upright and true; but they are almost always the victims of their good faith, and of their trust in those who seem to them to be patterns of honesty. What I had told the mother

surprised the daughter, but her astonishment was much greater when she heard of what I had said to her brother. After one moment of consideration, she told him that, with any other man but me, she would have been ruined; and that, if she had been in the place of Madame C——, she would never have forgiven him, because the way he had treated her was as debasing for her as for himself. P—— C—— was weeping, but the traitor could command tears whenever he pleased.

It was Whit Sunday, and as the theatres were closed he told me that, if I would be at the same place of appointment as before, the next day, he would leave his sister with me, and go by himself with Madame C——, whom he could not honourably leave alone.

"I will give you my key," he added, "and you can bring back my sister here as soon as you have supper together wherever you like."

And he handed me his key, which I had not the courage to refuse. After that he left us. I went away myself a few minutes afterwards, having previously agreed with C—— C—— that we would go to the Zuecca Garden on the following day.

I was punctual, and love exciting me to the highest degree I foresaw what would happen on that day. I had engaged a box at the opera, and we went to our garden until the evening. As it was a holiday there were several small parties of friends

sitting at various tables, and being unwilling to mix with other people we made up our minds to remain in the apartment which was given to us, and to go to the opera only towards the end of the performance. I therefore ordered a good supper. We had seven hours to spend together, and my charming young friend remarked that the time would certainly not seem long to us. She threw off her disguise and sat on my knees, telling me that I had completed the conquest of her heart by my reserve towards her during the supper with her brother; but all our conversation was accompanied by kisses which, little by little, were becoming more and more ardent.

"Did you see," she said to me, "what my brother did to Madame C—— when she placed herself astride on his knees? I only saw it in the looking-glass, but I could guess what it was."

"Were you not afraid of my treating you in the same manner?"

"No, I can assure you. How could I possibly fear such a thing, knowing how much you love me? You would have humiliated me so deeply that I should no longer have loved you. We will wait until we are married, will we not, dear? You cannot realize the extent of the joy I felt when I heard you speak to my mother as you did! We will love each other for ever. But will you explain to me, dearest, the meaning of the words embroidered upon my garters?"

"Is there any motto upon them? I was not aware of it."

"Oh, yes! it is in French; pray read it."

Seated on my knees, she took off one of her garters while I was unclasping the other, and here are the two lines which I found embroidered on them, and which I ought to have read before offering them to her:

En voyant chaque jour le bijou de ma belle,
Vous lui direz qu'Amour veut qu'il lui soit fidèle.

Those verses, rather free I must confess, struck me as very comic. I burst out laughing, and my mirth increased when, to please her, I had to translate their meaning. As it was an idea entirely new to her, I found it necessary to enter into particulars which lighted an ardent fire in our veins.

"Now," she observed, "I shall not dare to shew my garters to anybody, and I am very sorry for it."

As I was rather thoughtful, she added,——

"Tell me what you are thinking of?"

"I am thinking that those lucky garters have a privilege which perhaps I shall never enjoy. How I wish myself in their place: I may die of that wish, and die miserable."

"No, dearest, for I am in the same position as you, and I am certain to live. Besides, we can hasten our marriage. As far as I am concerned, I am ready to become your wife to-morrow if you

wish it. We are both free, and my father cannot refuse his consent."

"You are right, for he would be bound to consent for the sake of his honour. But I wish to give him a mark of my respect by asking for your hand, and after that everything will soon be ready. It might be in a week or ten days."

"So soon? You will see that my father will say that I am too young."

"Perhaps he is right."

"No; I am young, but not too young, and I am certain that I can be your wife."

I was on burning coals, and I felt that it was impossible for me to resist any longer the ardent fire which was consuming me.

"Oh, my best beloved!" I exclaimed, "do you feel certain of my love? Do you think me capable of deceiving you? Are you sure that you will never repent being my wife?"

"More than certain, darling; for you could not wish to make me unhappy."

"Well, then, let our marriage take place now. Let God alone receive our mutual pledges; we cannot have a better witness, for He knows the purity of our intentions. Let us mutually engage our faith, let us unite our destinies and be happy. We will afterwards legalize our tender love with your father's consent and with the ceremonies of the Church; in the mean time be mine, entirely mine."

"Dispose of me, dearest. I promise to God, I promise to you that, from this very moment and for ever, I will be your faithful wife; I will say the same to my father, to the priest who will bless our union—in fact, to everybody."

"I take the same oath towards you, darling, and I can assure you that we are now truly married. Come to my arms! Oh, dearest, complete my felicity!"

"Oh, dear! am I indeed so near happiness!"

After kissing her tenderly, I went down to tell the mistress of the house not to disturb us, and not to bring up our dinner until we called for it. During my short absence, my charming C—— C—— had thrown herself dressed on the bed, but I told her that the god of love disapproved of unnecessary veils, and in less than a minute I made of her a new Eve, beautiful in her nakedness as if she had just come out of the hands of the Supreme Artist. Her skin, as soft as satin, was dazzlingly white, and seemed still more so beside her splendid black hair which I had spread over her alabaster shoulders. Her slender figure, her prominent hips, her beautifully-modelled bosom, her large eyes, from which flashed the sparkle of amorous desire, everything about her was strikingly beautiful, and presented to my hungry looks the perfection of the mother of love, adorned by all the charms which modesty throws over the attractions of a lovely woman.

Beside myself, I almost feared lest my felicity should not prove real, or lest it should not be made perfect by complete enjoyment, when mischievous love contrived, in so serious a moment, to supply me with a reason for mirth.

"Is there by any chance a law to prevent the husband from undressing himself?" enquired my beautiful C—— C——.

"No, darling angel, no; and even if there were such a barbarous law, I would not submit to it."

In one instant, I had thrown off all my garments, and my mistress, in her turn, gave herself up to all the impulse of natural instinct and curiosity, for every part of my body was an entirely new thing to her. At last, as if she had had enough of the pleasure her eyes were enjoying, she pressed me against her bosom, and exclaimed,——

"Oh! dearest, what a difference between you and my pillow!"

"Your pillow, darling? You are laughing; what do you mean?"

"Oh! it is nothing but a childish fancy; I am afraid you will be angry."

"Angry! How could I be angry with you, my love, in the happiest moment of my life?"

"Well, for several days past, I could not go to sleep without holding my pillow in my arms; I caressed it, I called it my dear husband; I fancied it was you, and when a delightful enjoyment had left me without movement, I would go to sleep,

and in the morning find my pillow still between my arms."

My dear C——C—— became my wife with the courage of a true heroine, for her intense love caused her to delight even in bodily pain. After three hours spent in delicious enjoyment, I got up and called for our supper. The repast was simple, but very good. We looked at one another without speaking, for how could we find words to express our feelings? We thought that our felicity was extreme, and we enjoyed it with the certainty that we could renew it at will.

The hostess came up to enquire whether we wanted anything, and she asked if we were not going to the opera, which everybody said was so beautiful.

"Have you never been to the opera?"

"Never, because it is too dear for people in our position. My daughter has such a wish to go, that, God forgive me for saying it! she would give herself, I truly believe, to the man who would take her there once."

"That would be paying very dear for it," said my little wife, laughing. "Dearest, we could make her happy at less cost, for that hurts very much."

"I was thinking of it, my love. Here is the key of the box, you can make them a present of it."

"Here is the key of a box at the St. Moses Theatre," she said to the hostess; "it costs two

sequins; go instead of us, and tell your daughter to keep her rose-bud for something better."

"To enable you to amuse yourself, my good woman, take these two sequins," I added. "Let your daughter enjoy herself well."

The good hostess, thoroughly amazed at the generosity of her guests, ran in a great hurry to her daughter, while we were delighted at having laid ourselves under the pleasant necessity of again going to bed. She came up with her daughter, a handsome, tempting blonde, who insisted upon kissing the hands of her benefactors.

"She is going this minute with her lover," said the mother. "He is waiting for her; but I will not let her go alone with him, for he is not to be trusted; I am going with them."

"That is right, my good woman; but when you come back this evening, let the gondola wait for us; it will take us to Venice."

"What! Do you mean to remain here until we return?"

"Yes, for this is our wedding-day."

"To-day? God bless you!"

She then went to the bed, to put it to rights, and seeing the marks of my wife's virginity she came to my dear C—— C—— and, in her joy, kissed her, and immediately began a sermon for the special benefit of her daughter, shewing her those marks which, in her opinion, did infinite honour to the young bride: respectable marks, she

said, which in our days the god of Hymen sees but seldom on his altar.

The daughter, casting down her beautiful blue eyes, answered that the same would certainly be seen on her wedding-day.

"I am certain of it," said the mother, "for I never lose sight of thee. Go and get some water in this basin, and bring it here. This charming bride must be in need of it."

The girl obeyed. The two women having left us, we went to bed, and four hours of ecstatic delights passed off with wonderful rapidity. Our last engagement would have lasted longer, if my charming sweetheart had not taken a fancy to take my place and to reverse the position. Worn out with happiness and enjoyment, we were going to sleep, when the hostess came to tell us that the gondola was waiting for us. I immediately got up to open the door, in the hope that she would amuse us with her description of the opera; but she left that task to her daughter, who had come up with her, and she went down again to prepare some coffee for us. The young girl assisted my sweetheart to dress, but now and then she would wink at me in a manner which made me think that she had more experience than her mother imagined.

Nothing could be more indiscreet than the eyes of my beloved mistress; they wore the irrefutable marks of her first exploits. It is true that she had just been fighting a battle which had positively

made her a different being to what she was before the engagement.

We took some hot coffee, and I told our hostess to get us a nice dinner for the next day; we then left in the gondola. The dawn of day was breaking when we landed at St. Sophia's Square, in order to set the curiosity of the gondoliers at fault, and we parted happy, delighted, and certain that we were thoroughly married. I went to bed, having made up my mind to compel M. de Bragadin, through the power of the oracle, to obtain legally for me the hand of my beloved C—— C——. I remained in bed until noon, and spent the rest of the day in playing with ill luck, as if Dame Fortune had wished to warn me that she did not approve of my love.

CHAPTER XIII

CONTINUATION OF MY INTRIGUES WITH C. C.—M. DE BRAGADIN ASKS THE HAND OF THAT YOUNG PERSON FOR ME—HER FATHER REFUSES, AND SENDS HER TO A CONVENT—DE LA HAYE—I LOSE ALL MY MONEY AT THE FARO-TABLE—MY PARTNERSHIP WITH CROCE REPLENISHES MY PURSE—VARIOUS INCIDENTS.

The happiness derived from my love had prevented me from attaching any importance to my losses, and being entirely engrossed with the thought of my sweetheart my mind did not seem to care for whatever did not relate to her.

I was thinking of her the next morning when her brother called on me with a beaming countenance, and said,——

"I am certain that you have slept with my sister, and I am very glad of it. She does not confess as much, but her confession is not necessary. I will bring her to you to-day."

"You will oblige me, for I adore her, and I will get a friend of mine to ask her in marriage

from your father in such a manner that he will not be able to refuse."

"I wish it may be so, but I doubt it. In the mean time, I find myself compelled to beg another service from your kindness. I can obtain, against a note of hand payable in six months, a ring of the value of two hundred sequins, and I am certain to sell it again this very day for the same amount. That sum is very necessary to me just now, but the jeweller, who knows you, will not let me have it without your security. Will you oblige me in this instance? I know that you lost a great deal last night; if you want some money I will give you one hundred sequins, which you will return when the note of hand falls due."

How could I refuse him? I knew very well that I would be duped, but I loved his sister so much!

"I am ready," said I to him, "to sign the note of hand, but you are wrong in abusing my love for your sister in such a manner."

We went out, and the jeweller having accepted my security the bargain was completed. The merchant, who knew me only by name, thinking of paying me a great compliment, told P—— C—— that with my guarantee all his goods were at his service. I did not feel flattered by the compliment, but I thought I could see in it the knavery of P—— C——, who was clever enough to find out, out of a hundred, the fool who without any reason

placed confidence in me when I possessed nothing. It was thus that my angelic C—— C——, who seemed made to insure my happiness, was the innocent cause of my ruin.

At noon P—— C—— brought his sister; and wishing most likely to prove his honesty—for a cheat always tries hard to do that—he gave me back the letter of exchange which I had endorsed for the Cyprus wine, assuring me likewise that at our next meeting he would hand me the one hundred sequins which he had promised me.

I took my mistress as usual to Zuecca; I agreed for the garden to be kept closed, and we dined under a vine-arbour. My dear C—— C—— seemed to me more beautiful since she was mine, and, friendship being united to love we felt a delightful sensation of happiness which shone on our features. The hostess, who had found me generous, gave us some excellent game and some very fine fish; her daughter served us. She also came to undress my little wife as soon as we had gone upstairs to give ourselves up to the sweet pleasures natural to a young married couple.

When we were alone my loved asked me what was the meaning of the one hundred sequins which her brother had promised to bring me, and I told her all that had taken place between him and me.

"I entreat you, darling," she said to me, "to refuse all the demands of my brother in future; he

is, unfortunately, in such difficulties that he would at the end drag you down to the abyss into which he must fall."

This time our enjoyment seemed to us more substantial; we relished it with a more refined delight, and, so to speak, we reasoned over it.

"Oh, my best beloved!" she said to me, "do all in your power to render me pregnant; for in that case my father could no longer refuse his consent to my marriage, under the pretext of my being too young."

It was with great difficulty that I made her understand that the fulfilment of that wish, however much I shared it myself, was not entirely in our power; but that, under the circumstances, it would most probably be fulfilled sooner or later.

After working with all our might at the completion of that great undertaking, we gave several hours to a profound and delightful repose. As soon as we were awake I called for candles and coffee, and we set to work again in the hope of obtaining the mutual harmony of ecstatic enjoyment which was necessary to insure our future happiness. It was in the midst of our loving sport that the too early dawn surprised us, and we hurried back to Venice in order to avoid inquisitive eyes.

We renewed our pleasures on the Friday, but, whatever delight I may feel now in the remembrance of those happy moments, I will spare my

readers the description of my new enjoyment, because they might not feel interested in such repetitions. I must therefore only say that, before parting on that day, we fixed for the following Monday, the last day of the carnival, our last meeting in the Garden of Zuecca. Death alone could have hindered me from keeping that appointment, for it was to be the last opportunity of enjoying our amorous sport.

On the Monday morning I saw P—— C——, who confirmed the appointment for the same hour, and at the place previously agreed upon, and I was there in good time. In spite of the impatience of a lover, the first hour of expectation passes rapidly, but the second is mortally long. Yet the third and the fourth passed without my seeing my beloved mistress. I was in a state of fearful anxiety; I imagined the most terrible disasters. It seemed to me that if C—— C—— had been unable to go out her brother ought to have come to let me know it.

But some unexpected mishap might have detained him, and I could not go and fetch her myself at her house, even if I had feared nothing else than to miss them on the road. At last, as the church bells were tolling the *Angelus,* C—— C—— came alone, and masked.

"I was certain," she said, "that you were here, and here I am in spite of all my mother could say. You must be starving. My brother

has not put in an appearance through the whole of this day. Let us go quickly to our garden, for I am very hungry too, and love will console us for all we have suffered to-day."

She had spoken very rapidly, and without giving me time to utter a single word; I had nothing more to ask her. We went off, and took a gondola to our garden. The wind was very high, it blew almost a hurricane, and the gondola having only one rower the danger was great. C—— C——, who had no idea of it, was playing with me to make up for the restraint under which she had been all day; but her movements exposed the gondolier to danger; if he had fallen into the water, nothing could have saved us, and we would have found death on our way to pleasure. I told her to keep quiet, but, being anxious not to frighten her, I dared not acquaint her with the danger we were running. The gondolier, however, had not the same reasons for sparing her feelings, and he called out to us in a stentorian voice that, if we did not keep quiet, we were all lost. His threat had the desired effect, and we reached the landing without mishap. I paid the man generously, and he laughed for joy when he saw the money for which he was indebted to the bad weather.

We spent six delightful hours in our casino; this time sleep was not allowed to visit us. The only thought which threw a cloud over our felicity was that, the carnival being over, we did not know

how to contrive our future meetings. We agreed, however, that on the following Wednesday morning I should pay a visit to her brother, and that she would come to his room as usual.

We took leave of our worthy hostess, who, entertaining no hope of seeing us again, expressed her sorrow and overwhelmed us with blessings. I escorted my darling, without any accident, as far as the door of her house, and went home.

I had just risen at noon, when to my great surprise I had a visit from De la Haye with his pupil Calvi, a handsome young man, but the very copy of his master in everything. He walked, spoke, laughed exactly like him; it was the same language as that of the Jesuit—a correct but rather harsh French. I thought that excess of imitation perfectly scandalous, and I could not help telling De la Haye that he ought to change his pupil's deportment, because such servile mimicry would only expose him to bitter raillery. As I was giving him my opinion on that subject, Bavois made his appearance, and when he had spent an hour in the company of the young man he was entirely of the same mind. Calvi died two or three years later. De la Haye, who was bent upon forming pupils, became, two or three months after Calvi's death, the tutor of the young Chevalier de Morosini, the nephew of the nobleman to whom Bavois was indebted for his rapid fortune, who was then the Commissioner of the Republic to settle its boundaries

with the Austrian Government represented by Count Christiani.

I was in love beyond all measure, and I would not postpone an application on which my happiness depended any longer. After dinner, and as soon as everybody had retired, I begged M. de Bragadin and his two friends to grant me an audience of two hours in the room in which we were always inaccessible. There, without any preamble, I told them that I was in love with C—— C——, and determined on carrying her off if they could not contrive to obtain her from her father for my wife. "The question at issue," I said to M. de Bragadin, "is how to give me a respectable position, and to guarantee a dowry of ten thousand ducats which the young lady would bring me." They answered that, if Paralis gave them the necessary instructions, they were ready to fulfil them. That was all I wanted. I spent two hours in forming all the pyramids they wished, and the result was that M. de Bragadin himself would demand in my name the hand of the young lady; the oracle explaining the reason of that choice by stating that it must be the same person who would guarantee the dowry with his own fortune. The father of my mistress being then at his country-house, I told my friends that they would have due notice of his return, and that they were to be all three together when M. de Bragadin demanded the young lady's hand.

Well pleased with what I had done, I called

on P—— C—— the next morning. An old woman, who opened the door for me, told me that he was not at home, but that his mother would see me. She came immediately with her daughter, and they both looked very sad, which at once struck me as a bad sign. C—— C—— told me that her brother was in prison for debt, and that it would be difficult to get him out of it because his debts amounted to a very large sum. The mother, crying bitterly, told me how deeply grieved she was at not being able to support him in the prison, and she shewed me the letter he had written to her, in which he requested her to deliver an enclosure to his sister. I asked C—— C—— whether I could read it; she handed it to me, and I saw that he begged her to speak to me in his behalf. As I returned it to her, I told her to write to him that I was not in a position to do anything for him, but I entreated the mother to accept twenty-five sequins, which would enable her to assist him by sending him one or two at a time. She made up her mind to take them only when her daughter joined her entreaties to mine.

After this painful scene I gave them an account of what I had done in order to obtain the hand of my young sweetheart. Madame C—— thanked me, expressed her appreciation of my honourable conduct, but she told me not to entertain any hope, because her husband, who was very stubborn in his ideas, had decided that his daughter should marry a merchant, and not before the age of eighteen. He

was expected home that very day. As I was taking leave of them, my mistress contrived to slip in my hand a letter in which she told me that I could safely make use of the key which I had in my possession, to enter the house at midnight, and that I would find her in her brother's room. This news made me very happy, for, notwithstanding all the doubts of her mother, I hoped for success in obtaining her hand.

When I returned home, I told M. de Bragadin of the expected arrival of the father of my charming C—— C——, and the kind old man wrote to him immediately in my presence. He requested him to name at what time he might call on him on important business. I asked M. de Bragadin not to send his letter until the following day.

The reader can very well guess that C—— C—— had not to wait for me long after midnight. I gained admittance without any difficulty, and I found my darling, who received me with open arms.

"You have nothing to fear," she said to me; "my father has arrived in excellent health, and everyone in the house is fast asleep."

"Except Love," I answered, "which is now inviting us to enjoy ourselves. Love will protect us, dearest, and to-morrow your father will receive a letter from my worthy protector."

At those words C—— C—— shuddered. It was a presentiment of the future.

She said to me,——

"My father thinks of me now as if I were nothing but a child; but his eyes are going to be opened respecting me; he will examine my conduct, and God knows what will happen! Now, we are happy, even more than we were during our visits to Zuecca, for we can see each other every night without restraint. But what will my father do when he hears that I have a lover?"

"What can he do? If he refuses me your hand, I will carry you off, and the patriarch would certainly marry us. We shall be one another's for life."

"It is my most ardent wish, and to realize it I am ready to do anything; but, dearest, I know my father."

We remained two hours together, thinking less of our pleasures than of our sorrow; I went away promising to see her again the next night. The whole of the morning passed off very heavily for me, and at noon M. de Bragadin informed me that he had sent his letter to the father, who had answered that he would call himself on the following day to ascertain M. de Bragadin's wishes. At midnight I saw my beloved mistress again, and I gave her an account of all that had transpired. C—— C—— told me that the message of the senator had greatly puzzled her father, because, as he had never had any intercourse with that nobleman, he could not imagine what he wanted with him. Uncertainty, a sort of anxious

dread, and a confused hope, rendered our enjoyment much less lively during the two hours which we spent together. I had no doubt that M. Ch. C—— the father of my young friend, would go home immediately after his interview with M. de Bragadin, that he would ask his daughter a great many questions, and I feared lest C—— C——, in her trouble and confusion, should betray herself. She felt herself that it might be so, and I could see how painfully anxious she was. I was extremely uneasy myself, and I suffered much because, not knowing how her father would look at the matter, I could not give her any advice. As a matter of course, it was necessary for her to conceal certain circumstances which would have prejudiced his mind against us; yet it was urgent to tell him the truth and to shew herself entirely submissive to his will. I found myself placed in a strange position, and above all, I regretted having made the all-important application, precisely because it was certain to have too decisive a result. I longed to get out of the state of indecision in which I was, and I was surprised to see my young mistress less anxious than I was. We parted with heavy hearts, but with the hope that the next night would again bring us together, for the contrary did not seem to us possible.

The next day, after dinner, M. Ch. C—— called upon M. de Bragadin, but I did not shew myself. He remained a couple of hours with my

three friends, and as soon as he had gone I heard that his answer had been what the mother had told me, but with the addition of a circumstance most painful to me—namely, that his daughter would pass the four years which were to elapse, before she could think of marriage, in a convent. As a palliative to his refusal he had added, that, if by that time I had a well-established position in the world, he might consent to our wedding.

That answer struck me as most cruel, and in the despair in which it threw me I was not astonished when the same night I found the door by which I used to gain admittance to C—— C—— closed and locked inside.

I returned home more dead than alive, and lost twenty-four hours in that fearful perplexity in which a man is often thrown when he feels himself bound to take a decision without knowing what to decide. I thought of carrying her off, but a thousand difficulties combined to prevent the execution of that scheme, and her brother was in prison. I saw how difficult it would be to contrive a correspondence with my wife, for I considered C—— C—— as such, much more than if our marriage had received the sanction of the priest's blessing or of the notary's legal contract.

Tortured by a thousand distressing ideas, I made up my mind at last to pay a visit to Madame C——. A servant opened the door, and informed me that madame had gone to the country; she could

not tell me when she was expected to return to Venice. This news was a terrible thunder-bolt to me; I remained as motionless as a statue; for now that I had lost that last resource I had no means of procuring the slightest information. I tried to look calm in the presence of my three friends, but in reality I was in a state truly worthy of pity, and the reader will perhaps realize it if I tell him that in my despair I made up my mind to call on P—— C—— in his prison, in the hope that he might give me some information.

My visit proved useless; he knew nothing, and I did not enlighten his ignorance. He told me a great many lies which I pretended to accept as gospel, and giving him two sequins I went away, wishing him a prompt release.

I was racking my brain to contrive some way to know the position of my mistress—for I felt certain it was a fearful one—and believing her to be unhappy I reproached myself most bitterly as the cause of her misery. I had reached such a state of anxiety that I could neither eat nor sleep.

Two days after the refusal of the father, M. de Bragadin and his two friends went to Padua for a month. I had not had the heart to go with them, and I was alone in the house. I needed consolation and I went to the gaming-table, but I played without attention and lost a great deal. I had already sold whatever I possessed of any value, and I owed money everywhere. I could expect no assistance except from my three kind friends, but shame

prevented me from confessing my position to them. I was in that disposition which leads easily to self-destruction, and I was thinking of it as I was shaving myself before a toilet-glass, when the servant brought to my room a woman who had a letter for me. The woman came up to me, and, handing me the letter, she said,——

"Are you the person to whom it is addressed?"

I recognized at once a seal which I had given to C—— C——; I thought I would drop down dead. In order to recover my composure, I told the woman to wait, and I tried to shave myself, but my hand refused to perform its office. I put the razor down, turned my back on the messenger, and opening the letter I read the following lines:

"Before I can write all I have to say, I must be sure of my messenger. I am boarding in a convent, and am very well treated, and I enjoy excellent health in spite of the anxiety of my mind. The superior has been instructed to forbid me all visitors and correspondence. I am, however, already certain of being able to write to you, notwithstanding these very strict orders. I entertain no doubt of your good faith, my beloved husband, and I feel sure that you will never doubt a heart which is wholly yours. Trust to me for the execution of whatever you may wish me to do, for I am yours and only yours. Answer only a few words until we are quite certain of our messenger.

"Muran, June 12th."

In less than three weeks my young friend had become a clever moralist; it is true that Love had been her teacher, and Love alone can work miracles. As I concluded the reading of her letter, I was in the state of a criminal pardoned at the foot of the scaffold. I required several minutes before I recovered the exercise of my will and my presence of mind.

I turned towards the messenger, and asked her of she could read.

"Ah, sir! if I could not read, it would be a great misfortune for me. There are seven women appointed for the service of the nuns of Muran. One of us comes in turn to Venice once a week; I come every Wednesday, and this day week I shall be able to bring you an answer to the letter which, if you like, you can write now."

"Then you can take charge of the letters entrusted to you by the nuns?"

"That is not supposed to be one of our duties but the faithful delivery of letters being the most important of the commissions committed to our care, we should not be trusted if we could not read the address of the letters placed in our hands. The nuns want to be sure that we shall not give to Peter the letter addressed to Paul. The good mothers are always afraid of our being guilty of such blunders. Therefore I shall be here again, without fail, this day week at the same hour, but please to order your servant to wake you in case you should be

asleep, for our time is measured as if it were gold. Above all, rely entirely upon my discretion as long as you employ me; for if I did not know how to keep a silent tongue in my head I should lose my bread, and then what would become of me—a widow with four children, a boy eight years old, and three pretty girls, the eldest of whom is only sixteen? You can see them when you come to Muran. I live near the church, on the garden side, and I am always at home when I am not engaged in the service of the nuns, who are always sending me on one commission or another. The young lady—I do not know her name yet, for she has only been one week with us—gave me this letter, but so cleverly! Oh! she must be as witty as she is pretty, for three nuns who were there were completely bamboozled. She gave it to me with this other letter for myself, which I likewise leave in your hands. Poor child! she tells me to be discreet! She need not be afraid. Write to her, I entreat you, sir, that she can trust me, and answer boldly. I would not tell you to act in the same manner with all the other messengers of the convent, although I believe them to be honest—and God forbid I should speak ill of my fellow-creature—but they are all ignorant, you see; and it is certain that they babble, at least, with their confessors, if with nobody else. As for me, thank God! I know very well that I need not confess anything but my sins, and surely to carry a letter from a Christian woman

to her brother in Christ is not a sin. Besides, my confessor is a good old monk, quite deaf, I believe, for the worthy man never answers me; but that is his business, not mine!"

I had not intended to ask her any questions, but if such had been my intention she would not have given me time to carry it into execution; and without my asking her anything, she was telling me everything I cared to know, and she did so in her anxiety for me to avail myself of her services exclusively.

I immediately sat down to write to my dear recluse, intending at first to write only a few lines, as she had requested me; but my time was too short to write so little. My letter was a screed of four pages, and very likely it said less than her note of one short page. I told her her letter had saved my life, and asked her whether I could hope to see her. I informed her that I had given a sequin to the messenger, that she would find another for herself under the seal of my letter, and that I would send her all the money she might want. I entreated her not to fail writing every Wednesday, to be certain that her letters would never be long enough to give me full particulars, not only of all she did, of all she was allowed to do, but also of all her thoughts respecting her release from imprisonment, and the overcoming of all the obstacles which were in the way of our mutual happiness; for I was as much hers as she was mine. I hinted

to her the necessity of gaining the love of all the nuns and boarders, but without taking them into her confidence, and of shewing no dislike of her convent life. After praising her for the clever manner in which she had contrived to write to me, in spite of superior orders, I made her understand how careful she was to be to avoid being surprised while she was writing, because in such a case her room would certainly be searched and all her papers seized.

"Burn all my letters, darling," I added, "and recollect that you must go to confession often, but without implicating our love. Share with me all your sorrows, which interest me even more than your joys."

I sealed my letter in such a manner that no one could possibly guess that there was a sequin hidden under the sealing wax, and I rewarded the woman, promising her that I would give her the same reward every time that she brought me a letter from my friend. When she saw the sequin which I had put in her hand the good woman cried for joy, and she told me that, as the gates of the convent were never closed for her, she would deliver my letter the moment she found the young lady alone.

Here is the note which C—— C—— had given to the woman, with the letter addressed to me:

"God Himself, my good woman, prompts me to have confidence in you rather than in anybody

else. Take this letter to Venice, and should the person to whom it is addressed not be in the city, bring it back to me. You must deliver it to that person himself, and if you find him you will most likely have an answer, which you must give me, but only when you are certain that nobody can see you."

If Love is imprudent, it is only in the hope of enjoyment; but when it is necessary to bring back happiness destroyed by some untoward accident, Love foresees all that the keenest perspicacity could possibly find out. The letter of my charming wife overwhelmed me with joy, and in one moment I passed from a state of despair to that of extreme felicity. I felt certain that I should succeed in carrying her off even if the walls of the convent could boast of artillery, and after the departure of the messenger my first thought was to endeavour to spend the seven days, before I could receive the second letter, pleasantly. Gambling alone could do it, but everybody had gone to Padua. I got my trunk ready, and immediately sent it to the *burchiello* then ready to start, and I left for Fusina. From that place I posted, and in less than three hours I arrived at the door of the Bragadin Palace, where I found my dear protector on the point of sitting down to dinner. He embraced me affectionately, and seeing me covered with perspiration he said to me,——

"I am certain that you are in no hurry."

"No," I answered, "but I am starving."

I brought joy to the brotherly trio, and I enhanced their happiness when I told my friends that I would remain six days with them. De la Haye dined with us on that day; as soon as dinner was over he closeted himself with M. Dandolo, and for two hours they remained together. I had gone to bed during that time, but M. Dandolo came up to me and told me that I had arrived just in time to consult the oracle respecting an important affair entirely private to himself. He gave me the questions, and requested me to find the answers. He wanted to know whether he would act rightly if he accepted a project proposed to him by De la Haye.

The oracle answered negatively.

M. Dandolo, rather surprised, asked a second question: he wished Paralis to give his reasons for the denial.

I formed the cabalistic pile, and brought out this answer:

"I asked Casanova's opinion, and as I find it opposed to the proposal made by De la Haye, I do not wish to hear any more about it."

Oh! wonderful power of self-delusion! This worthy man, pleased at being able to throw the odium of a refusal on me, left me perfectly satisfied. I had no idea of the nature of the affair to which he had been alluding, and I felt no curiosity about it; but it annoyed me that a Jesuit should interfere and

try to make my friends do anything otherwise than through my instrumentality, and I wanted that intriguer to know that my influence was greater than his own.

After that, I dressed, masked myself, and went to the opera, where I sat down to a faro-table and lost all my money. Fortune was determined to shew me that it does not always agree with love. My heart was heavy, I felt miserable; I went to bed. When I woke in the morning, I saw De la Haye come into my room with a beaming countenance, and, assuming an air of devoted friendship, he made a great show of his feelings towards me. I knew what to think of it all, and I waited for the *dénouement.*

"My dear friend," he said to me at last, "why did you dissuade M. Dandolo from doing what I had insinuated to him?"

"What had you insinuated to him?"

"You know well enough."

"If I knew it, I would not ask you."

"M. Dandolo himself told me that you had advised him against it."

"Advised against, that may be, but certainly not dissuaded, for if he had been persuaded in his own mind he would not have asked my advice."

"As you please; but may I enquire your reasons?"

"Tell me first what your proposal was."

"Has he not told you?"

"Perhaps he has; but if you wish to know my reasons, I must hear the whole affair from your own lips, because M. Dandolo spoke to me under a promise of secrecy."

"Of what good is all this reserve?"

"Everyone has his own principles and his own way of thinking: I have a sufficiently good opinion of you to believe that you would act exactly as I do, for I have heard you say that in all secret matters one ought to guard against surprise."

"I am incapable of taking such an advantage of a friend; but as a general rule your maxim is a right one; I like prudence. I will tell you the whole affair. You are aware that Madame Tripolo has been left a widow, and that M. Dandolo is courting her assiduously, after having done the same for fourteen years during the life of the husband. The lady, who is still young, beautiful and lovely, and also is very respectable, wishes to become his wife. It is to me that she has confided her wishes, and as I saw nothing that was not praiseworthy, either in a temporal or in a spiritual point of view, in that union, for after all we are all men, I took the affair in hand with real pleasure. I fancied even that M. Dandolo felt some inclination for that marriage when he told me that he would give me his decision this morning. I am not astonished at his having asked your advice in such an important affair, for a prudent man is right in asking the opinion of a wise friend before taking a decisive

step; but I must tell you candidly that I am astonished at your disapproval of such a marriage. Pray excuse me if, in order to improve by the information, I ask why your opinion is exactly the reverse of mine."

Delighted at having discovered the whole affair, and at having arrived in time to prevent my friend who was goodness itself contracting an absurd marriage, I answered the hypocrite that I loved M. Dandolo, that I knew his temperament, and that I was certain that a marriage with a woman like Madame Tripolo would shorten his life.

"That being my opinion," I added, "you must admit that as a true friend I was right in advising him against your proposal. Do you recollect having told me that you never married for the very same reason? Do you recollect your strong arguments in favour of celibacy while we were at Parma? Consider also, I beg, that every man has a certain small stock of selfishness, and that I may be allowed to have mine when I think that if M. Dandolo took a wife the influence of that wife would of course have some weight, and that the more she gained in influence over him the more I should lose. So you see it would not be natural for me to advise him to take a step which would ultimately prove very detrimental to my interests. If you can prove that my reasons are either trifling or sophistical, speak openly: I will tell M. Dandolo that my mind has changed; Madame Tripolo will

become his wife when we return to Venice. But let me warn you that thorough conviction can alone move me."

"I do not believe myself clever enough to convince you. I shall write to Madame Tripolo that she must apply to you."

"Do not write anything of the sort to that lady, or she will think that you are laughing at her. Do you suppose her foolish enough to expect that I will give way to her wishes? She knows that I do not like her."

"How can she possibly know that?"

"She must have remarked that that I have never cared to accompany M. Dandolo to her house. Learn from me once for all, that as long as I live with my three friends they shall have no wife but me. You may get married as soon as you please; I promise not to throw any obstacle in your way; but if you wish to remain on friendly terms with me give up all idea of leading my three friends astray."

"You are very caustic this morning."

"I lost all my money last night."

"Then I have chosen a bad time. Farewell."

From that day, De la Haye became my secret enemy, and to him I was in a great measure indebted, two years later, for my imprisonment under The Leads of Venice; not owing to his slanders, for I do not believe he was capable of that, Jesuit though he was—and even amongst

such people there is sometimes some honourable feeling—but through the mystical insinuations which he made in the presence of bigoted persons. I must give fair notice to my readers that, if they are fond of such people, they must not read these Memoirs, for they belong to a tribe which I have good reason to attack unmercifully.

The fine marriage was never again alluded to. M. Dandolo continued to visit his beautiful widow every day, and I took care to elicit from Paralis a strong interdiction ever to put my foot in her house.

Don Antonio Croce, a young Milanese whom I had known in Reggio, a confirmed gambler, and a downright clever hand in securing the favours of Dame Fortune, called on me a few minutes after De la Haye had retired. He told me that, having seen me lose all my money the night before, he had come to offer me the means of retrieving my losses, if I would take an equal interest with him in a faro bank that he meant to hold at his house, and in which he would have as punters seven or eight rich foreigners who were courting his wife.

"If you will put three hundred sequins in my bank," he added, "you shall be my partner. I have three hundred sequins myself, but that is not enough because the punters play high. Come and dine at my house, and you will make their acquaintance. We can play next Friday as there will be no opera, and you may rely upon our winning plenty of gold,

for a certain Gilenspetz, a Swede, may lose twenty thousand sequins."

I was without any resources, or at all events I could expect no assistance except from M. de Bragadin upon whom I felt ashamed of encroaching. I was well aware that the proposal made by Croce was not strictly moral, and that I might have chosen a more honourable society; but if I had refused, the purse of Madame Croce's admirers would not have been more mercifully treated; another would have profited by that stroke of good fortune. I was therefore not rigid enough to refuse my assistance as adjutant and my share of the pie; I accepted Croce's invitation.

CHAPTER XIV

I GET RICH AGAIN—MY ADVENTURE AT DOLO—ANALYSIS OF A LONG LETTER FROM C. C.—MISCHIEVOUS TRICK PLAYED UPON ME BY P. C.—AT VINCENZA—A TRAGI-COMEDY AT THE INN

Necessity, that imperious law and my only excuse, having made me almost the partner of a cheat, there was still the difficulty of finding the three hundred sequins required; but I postponed the task of finding them until after I should have made the acquaintance of the dupes of the goddess to whom they addressed their worship. Croce took me to the Prato della Valle, where we found madame surrounded with foreigners. She was pretty; and as a secretary of the imperial ambassador, Count Rosemberg, had attached himself to her, not one of the Venetian nobles dared court her. Those who interested me among the satellites gravitating around that star were the Swede Gilenspetz, a Hamburger, the Englishman Mendez, who has already been mentioned, and three or four others to whom Croce called my attention.

We dined all together, and after dinner there was a general call for a faro bank; but Croce did not accept. His refusal surprised me, because with three hundred sequins, being a very skilful player, he had enough to try his fortune. He did not, however, allow my suspicions to last long, for he took me to his own room and shewed me fifty pieces of eight, which were equal to three hundred sequins. When I saw that the professional gambler had not chosen me as his partner with the intention of making a dupe of me, I told him that I would certainly procure the amount, and upon that promise he invited everybody to supper for the following day. We agreed that we would divide the spoils before parting in the evening, and that no one should be allowed to play on trust.

I had to procure the amount, but to whom could I apply? I could ask no one but M. de Bragadin. The excellent man had not that sum in his possession, for his purse was generally empty; but he found a usurer—a species of animal too numerous unfortunately for young men—who, upon a note of hand endorsed by him, gave me a thousand ducats, at five per cent. for one month, the said interest being deducted by anticipation from the capital. It was exactly the amount I required. I went to the supper; Croce held the bank until daylight, and we divided sixteen hundred sequins between us. The game continued the next evening, and Gilenspetz alone lost two thousand sequins;

the Jew Mendez lost about one thousand. Sunday was sanctified by rest, but on Monday the bank won four thousand sequins. On the Tuesday we all dined together, and the play was resumed; but we had scarcely begun when an officer of the *podestà* made his appearance and informed Croce that he wanted a little private conversation with him. They left the room together, and after a short absence Croce came back rather crestfallen; he announced that by superior orders he was forbidden to hold a bank at his house. Madame fainted away, the punters hurried out, and I followed their example, as soon as I had secured one-half of the gold which was on the table; I was glad enough it was not worse. As I left, Croce told me that we would meet again in Venice, for he had been ordered to quit Padua within twenty-four hours. I expected it would be so, because he was too well known; but his greatest crime, in the opinion of the *podesta,* was that he attracted the players to his own house, whilst the authorities wanted all the lovers of play to lose their money at the opera, where the bankers were mostly noblemen from Venice.

I left the city on horseback in the evening and in very bad weather, but nothing could have kept me back, because early the next morning I expected a letter from my dear prisoner. I had only travelled six miles from Padua when my horse fell, and I found my left leg caught under it. My boots were soft ones, and I feared I had hurt myself. The postillion

was ahead of me, but hearing the noise made by the fall he came up and disengaged me; I was not hurt, but my horse was lame. I immediately took the horse of the postillion, to which I was entitled, but the insolent fellow getting hold of the bit refused to let me proceed. I tried to make him understand that he was wrong; but, far from giving way to my arguments, he persisted in stopping me, and being in a great hurry to continue my journey I fired one of my pistols in his face, but without touching him. Frightened out of his wits, the man let go, and I galloped off. When I reached the Dolo, I went straight to the stables, and I myself saddled a hore which a postillion, to whom I gave a crown, pointed out to me as being excellent. No one thought of being astonished at my other postillion having remained behind, and we started at full speed. It was then one o'clock in the morning; the storm had broken up the road, and the night was so dark that I could not see anything within a yard ahead of me; the day was breaking when we arrived in Fusina.

The boatmen threatened me with a fresh storm; but setting everything at defiance I took a four-oared boat, and reached my dwelling quite safe but shivering with cold and wet to the skin. I had scarcely been in my room for a quarter of an hour when the messenger from Muran presented herself and gave me a letter, telling me that she would call for the answer in two hours.

That letter was a journal of seven pages, the faithful translation of which might weary my readers, but here is the substance of it:

After his interview with M. de Bragadin, the father of C—— C—— had gone home, had his wife and daughter to his room, and enquired kindly from the last where she had made my acquaintance. She answered that she had seen me five or six times in her brother's room, that I had asked her whether she would consent to be my wife, and that she had told me that she was dependent upon her father and mother. The father had then said that she was too young to think of marriage, and besides, I had not yet conquered a position in society. After that decision he repaired to his son's room, and locked the small door inside as well as the one communicating with the apartment of the mother, who was instructed by him to let me believe that she had gone to the country, in case I should call on her.

Two days afterwards he came to C—— C——, who was beside her sick mother, and told her that her aunt would take her to a convent, where she was to remain until a husband had been provided for her by her parents. She answered that, being perfectly disposed to submit to his will, she would gladly obey him. Pleased with her ready obedience he promised to go and see her, and to let his mother visit her likewise, as soon as her health was better. Immediately after that conversation

the aunt had called for her, and a gondola had taken them to the convent, where she had been ever since. Her bed and her clothes had been brought to her; she was well pleased with her room and with the nun to whom she had been entrusted, and under whose supervision she was. It was by her that she had been forbidden to receive either letters or visits, or to write to anybody, under penalty of excommunication from the Holy Father, of everlasting damnation, and of other similar trifles; yet the same nun had supplied her with paper, ink and books, and it was at night that my young friend transgressed the laws of the convent in order to write all these particulars to me. She expressed her conviction respecting the discretion and the faithfulness of the messenger, and she thought that she would remain devoted, because, being poor, our sequins were a little fortune for her.

She related to me in the most assuring manner that the handsomest of all the nuns in the convent loved her to distraction, gave her a French lesson twice a-day, and had amicably forbidden her to become acquainted with the other boarders. That nun was only twenty-two years of age; she was beautiful, rich and generous; all the other nuns shewed her great respect. "When we are alone," wrote my friend, "she kisses me so tenderly that you would be jealous if she were not a woman." As to our project of running away, she

did not think it would be very difficult to carry it into execution, but that it would be better to wait until she knew the locality better. She told me to remain faithful and constant, and asked me to send her my portrait hidden in a ring by a secret spring known only to us. She added that I might send it to her by her mother, who had recovered her usual health, and was in the habit of attending early mass at her parish church every day by herself. She assured me that the excellent woman would be delighted to see me, and to do anything I might ask her. "At all events," she concluded, "I hope to find myself in a few months in a position which will scandalize the convent if they are obstinately bent upon keeping me here."

I was just finishing my answer when Laura, the messenger, returned for it. After I had paid the sequin I had promised her, I gave her a parcel containing sealing-wax, paper, pens, and a tinder-box, which she promised to deliver to C—— C——. My darling had told her that I was her cousin, and Laura feigned to believe it.

Not knowing what to do in Venice, and believing that I ought for the sake of my honour to shew myself in Padua, or else people might suppose that I had received the same order as Croce, I hurried my breakfast, and procured a *bolletta* from the booking-office for Rome; because I foresaw that the firing of my pistol and the lame

horse might not have improved the temper of the post-masters; but by shewing them what is called in Italy a *bolletta,* I knew that they could not refuse to supply me with horses whenever they had any in their stables. As far as the pistol-shot was concerned I had no fear, for I had purposely missed the insolent postillion; and even if I had killed him on the spot it would not have been of much importance.

In Fusina I took a two-wheeled chaise, for I was so tired that I could not have performed the journey on horseback, and I reached the Dolo, where I was recognized and horses were refused me.

I made a good deal of noise, and the post-master, coming out, threatened to have me arrested if I did not pay him for his dead horse. I answered that if the horse were dead I would account for it to the post-master in Padua, but what I wanted was fresh horses without delay.

And I shewed him the dread *bolletta,* the sight of which made him lower his tone; but he told me that, even if he supplied me with horses, I had treated the postillion so badly that not one of his men would drive me. "If that is the case," I answered, "you shall accompany me yourself." The fellow laughed in my face, turned his back upon me, and went away. I took two witnesses, and I called with them at the office of a public notary, who drew up a properly-worded document,

by which I gave notice to the post-master that I should expect an indemnity of ten sequins for each hour of delay until I had horses supplied to me.

As soon as he had been made acquainted with the contents of this, he gave orders to bring out two restive horses. I saw at once that his intention was to have me upset along the road, and perhaps thrown into the river; but I calmly told the postillion that at the very moment my chaise was upset I would blow his brains out with a pistol-shot; this threat frightened the man; he took his horses back to the stables, and declared to his master that he would not drive me. At that very moment a courier arrived, who called for six carriage horses and two saddle ones. I warned the post-master that no one should leave the place before me, and that if he opposed my will there would be a sanguinary contest; in order to prove that I was in earnest I took out my pistols. The fellow began to swear, but, everyone saying that he was in the wrong, he disappeared.

Five minutes afterwards whom should I see, arriving in a beautiful berlin drawn by six horses, but Croce with his wife, a lady's maid, and two lackeys in grand livery. He alighted, we embraced one another, and I told him, assuming an air of sadness, that he could not leave before me. I explained how the case stood; he said I was right, scolded loudly, as if he had been a great lord, and made everybody tremble. The post-master

had disappeared; his wife came and ordered the postillions to attend to my wants. During that time Croce said to me that I was quite right in going back to Padua, where the public rumour had spread the report of my having left the city in consequence of an order from the police. He informed me that the *podesta* had likewise expelled M. de Gondoin, a colonel in the service of the Duke of Modena, because he held a faro bank at his house. I promised him to pay him a visit in Venice in the ensuing week. Croce, who had dropped from the sky to assist me in a moment of great distress, had won ten thousand sequins in four evenings: I had received five thousand for my share; and lost no time in paying my debts and in redeeming all the articles which I had been compelled to pledge. That scamp brought me back the smiles of Fortune, and from that moment I got rid of the ill luck which had seemed to fasten on me.

I reached Padua in safety, and the postillion, who very likely out of fear had driven me in good style, was well pleased with my liberality; it was the best way of making peace with the tribe. My arrival caused great joy to my three friends, whom my sudden departure had alarmed, with the exception of M. de Bragadin, in whose hands I had placed my cash-box the day before. His two friends had given credence to the general report, stating that the *podesta* had ordered me to leave Padua. They forgot that I was a citizen of Venice,

and that the *podesta* could not pass such a sentence upon me without exposing himself to legal proceedings. I was tired, but instead of going to bed I dressed myself in my best attire in order to go to the opera without a mask. I told my friends that it was necessary for me to shew myself, so as to give the lie to all that had been reported about me by slandering tongues. De la Haye said to me,—

"I shall be delighted if all those reports are false; but you have no one to blame but yourself, for your hurried departure gave sufficient cause for all sorts of surmises."

"And for slander."

"That may be; but people want to know everything, and they invent when they cannot guess the truth."

"And evil-minded fools lose no time in repeating those inventions everywhere."

"But there can be no doubt that you wanted to kill the postillion. Is that a calumny likewise?"

"The greatest of all. Do you think that a good shot can miss a man when he is firing in his very face, unless he does it purposely?"

"It seems difficult; but at all events it is certain that the horse is dead, and you must pay for it."

"No, sir, not even if the horse belonged to you, for the postillion preceded me. You know a great many things; do you happen to know the posting regulations? Besides, I was in a great

hurry because I had promised a pretty woman to breakfast with her, and such engagements, as you are well aware, cannot be broken."

Master de la Haye looked angry at the rather caustic irony with which I had sprinkled the dialogue; but he was still more vexed when, taking some gold out of my pocket, I returned to him the sum he had lent me in Vienna. A man never argues well except when his purse is well filled; then his spirits are pitched in a high key, unless he should happen to be stupefied by some passion raging in his soul.

M. de Bragadin thought I was quite right to shew myself at the opera without a mask.

The moment I made my appearance in the pit everybody seemed quite astonished, and I was overwhelmed with compliments, sincere or not. After the first ballet I went to the card-room, and in four deals I won five hundred sequins. Starving, and almost dead for want of sleep, I returned to my friends to boast of my victory. My friend Bavois was there, and he seized the opportunity to borrow from me fifty sequins, which he never returned; true, I never asked him for them.

My thoughts being constantly absorbed in my dear C—— C——, I spent the whole of the next day in having my likeness painted in miniature by a skilful Piedmontese, who had come for the Fair of Padua, and who in after times made a great deal of money in Venice. When he had completed my

portrait he painted for me a beautiful St. Catherine of the same size, and a clever Venetian jeweller made the ring, the bezel of which shewed only the sainted virgin; but a blue spot, hardly visible on the white enamel which surrounded it, corresponded with the secret spring which brought out my portrait, and the change was obtained by pressing on the blue spot with the point of a pin.

On the following Friday, as we were rising from the dinner-table, a letter was handed to me. It was with great surprise that I recognized the writing of P—— C——. He asked me to pay him a visit at the "Star Hotel," where he would give me some interesting information. Thinking that he might have something to say concerning his sister, I went to him at once.

I found him with Madame C——, and after congratulating him upon his release from prison I asked him for the news he had to communicate.

"I am certain," he said, "that my sister is in a convent, and I shall be able to tell you the name of it when I return to Venice."

"You will oblige me," I answered, pretending not to know anything.

But his news had only been a pretext to make me come to him, and his eagerness to communicate it had a very different object in view than the gratification of my curiosity.

"I have sold," he said to me, "my privileged contract for three years for a sum of fifteen thousand

florins, and the man with whom I have made the bargain took me out of prison by giving security for me, and advanced me six thousand florins in four letters of exchange."

He shewed me the letters of exchange, endorsed by a name which I did not know, but which he said was a very good one, and he continued,—

"I intend to buy six thousand florins' worth of silk goods from the looms of Vicenza, and to give in payment to the merchants these letters of exchange. I am certain of selling those goods rapidly with a profit of ten per cent. Come with us to Vicenza; I will give you some of my goods to the amount of two hundred sequins, and thus you will find yourself covered for the guarantee which you have been kind enough to give to the jeweller for the ring. We shall complete the transaction within twenty-four hours."

I did not feel much inclination for the trip, but I allowed myself to be blinded by the wish to cover the amount which I had guaranteed, and which I had no doubt I would be called upon to pay some day or other.

"If I do not go with him," I said to myself "he will sell the goods at a loss of twenty-five per cent., and I shall get nothing."

I promised to accompany him. He shewed me several letters of recommendation for the best houses in Vicenza, and our departure was fixed for early the next morning. I was at the "Star Hotel"

by day-break. A carriage and four was ready; the hotel-keeper came up with his bill, and P—— C—— begged me to pay it. The bill amounted to five sequins, four of which had been advanced in cash by the landlord to pay the driver who had brought them from Fusina. I saw that it was a put-up thing, yet I paid with pretty good grace, for I guessed that the scoundrel had left Venice without a penny. We reached Vicenza in three hours, and we put up at the "Cappello," where P—— C—— ordered a good dinner before leaving me with the lady to call upon the manufacturers.

When the beauty found herself alone with me, she began by addressing friendly reproaches to me.

"I have loved you," she said, "for eighteen years; the first time that I saw you we were in Padua, and we were then only nine years old."

I certainly had no recollection of it. She was the daughter of the antiquarian friend of M. Grimani, who had placed me as a boarder with the accursed Sclavonian woman. I could not help smiling, for I recollected that her mother had loved me.

Shopboys soon began to make their appearance, bringing pieces of goods, and the face of Madame C—— brightened up. In less than two hours the room was filled with them, and P—— C—— came back with two merchants, whom he had invited to dinner. Madame allured them by her pretty manners; we dined, and exquisite wines

were drunk in profusion. In the afternoon fresh goods were brought in; P—— C—— made a list of them with the prices; but he wanted more, and the merchants promised to send them the next day, although it was Sunday.

Towards the evening several counts arrived, for in Vicenza every nobleman is a count. P—— C—— had left his letters of recommendation at their houses. We had a Count Velo, a Count Sesso, a Count Trento—all very amiable companions. They invited us to accompany them to the casino, where Madame C—— shone by her charms and her coquettish manners. After we had spent two hours in that place, P—— C—— invited all his new friends to supper, and it was a scene of gaiety and profusion. The whole affair annoyed me greatly, and therefore I was not amiable; the consequence was that no one spoke to me. I rose from my seat and went to bed, leaving the joyous company still round the festive board. In the morning I came downstairs, had my breakfast, and looked about me. The room was so full of goods that I did not see how P—— C—— could possibly pay for all with his six thousand florins. He told me, however, that his business would be completed on the morrow, and that we were invited to a ball where all the nobility would be present. The merchants with whom he had dealt came to dine with us, and the dinner was remarkable for its extreme profusion.

We went to the ball; but I soon got very weary of it, for everybody was speaking to Madame C—— and to P—— C——, who never uttered a word with any meaning, but whenever I opened my lips people would pretend not to hear me. I invited a lady to dance a minuet; she accepted, but she looked constantly to the right or to the left, and seemed to consider me as a mere dancing machine. A quadrille was formed, but the thing was contrived in such a manner as to leave me out of it, and the very lady who had refused me as a partner danced with another gentleman. Had I been in good spirits I should certainly have resented such conduct, but I preferred to leave the ball-room. I went to bed, unable to understand why the nobility of Vicenza treated me in such a way. Perhaps they neglected me because I was not named in the letters of introduction given to P—— C——, but I thought that they might have known the laws of common politeness. I bore the evil patiently, however, as we were to leave the city the next day.

On Monday, the worthy pair being tired, they slept until noon, and after dinner P—— C—— went out to pay for the goods.

We were to go away early on the Tuesday, and I instinctively longed for that moment. The counts whom P—— C—— had invited were delighted with his mistress, and they came to supper; but I avoided meeting them.

On the Tuesday morning I was duly informed

that breakfast was ready, but as I did not answer the summons quickly enough the servant came up again, and told me that my wife requested me to make haste. Scarcely had the word "wife" escaped his lips than I visited the cheek of the poor fellow with a tremendous smack, and in my rage kicked him downstairs, the bottom of which he reached in four springs, to the imminent risk of his neck. Maddened with rage I entered the breakfast-room, and addressing myself to P—— C—— I asked him who was the scoundrel who had announced me in the hotel as the husband of Madame C——. He answered that he did not know; but at the same moment the landlord came into the room with a big knife in his hand, and asked me why I had kicked his servant down the stairs. I quickly drew a pistol, and threatening him with it I demanded imperatively from him the name of the person who had represented me as the husband of that woman.

"Captain P—— C——," answered the landlord, "gave the names, profession, etc., of your party."

At this I seized the impudent villain by the throat, and pinning him against the wall with a strong hand I would have broken his head with the butt of my pistol, if the landlord had not prevented me. Madame had pretended to swoon, for those women can alway command tears or fainting fits, and the cowardly P—— C—— kept on saying,—

"It is not true, it is not true!"

The landlord ran out to get the hotel register,

and he angrily thrust it under the nose of the coward, daring him to deny his having dictated: *Captain P—— C——, with M. and Madame Casanova.* The scoundrel answered that his words had certainly not been heard rightly, and the incensed landlord slapped the book in his face with such force that he sent him rolling, almost stunned, against the wall.

When I saw that the wretched poltroon was receiving such degrading treatment without remembering that he had a sword hanging by his side, I left the room, and asked the landlord to order me a carriage to take me to Padua.

Beside myself with rage, blushing for very shame, seeing but too late the fault I had committed by accepting the society of a scoundrel, I went up to my room, and hurriedly packed up my carpet-bag. I was just going out when Madame C—— presented herself before me.

"Begone, madam," I said to her, "or, in my rage, I might forget the respect due to your sex."

She threw herself, crying bitterly, on a chair, entreated me to forgive her, assuring me that she was innocent, and that she was not present when the knave had given the names. The landlady, coming in at that moment, vouched for the truth of her assertion. My anger began to abate, and as I passed near the window I saw the carriage I had ordered waiting for me with a pair of good horses. I called for the landlord in order to pay

whatever my share of the expense might come to, but he told me that as I had ordered nothing myself I had nothing to pay. Just at that juncture Count Velo came in.

"I daresay, count," I said, "that you believe this woman to be my wife."

"That is a fact known to everybody in the city."

"Damnation! And you have believed such a thing, knowing that I occupy this room alone, and seeing me leave the ball-room and the supper-table yesterday alone, leaving her with you all!"

"Some husbands are blessed with such easy dispositions!"

"I do not think I look like one of that species, and you are not a judge of men of honour: let us go out, and I undertake to prove it to you."

The count rushed down the stairs and out of the hotel. The miserable C—— was choking, and I could not help pitying her; for a woman has in her tears a weapon which through my life I have never known how to resist. I considered that if I left the hotel without paying anything, people might laugh at my anger and suppose that I had a share in the swindle; I requested the landlord to bring me the account, intending to pay half of it. He went for it, but another scene awaited me. Madame C——, bathed in tears, fell on her knees, and told me that if I abandoned her she was lost, for she had no money and nothing to leave as security for her hotel bill.

"What, madam! Have you not letters of exchange to the amount of six thousand florins, or the goods bought with them?"

"The goods are no longer here; they have all been taken away, because the letters of exchange, which you saw, and which we considered as good as cash, only made the merchants laugh; they have sent for everything. Oh! who could have supposed it?"

"The scoundrel! He knew it well enough, and that is why he was so anxious to bring me here. Well, it is right that I should pay the penalty of my own folly."

The bill brought by the landlord amounted to forty sequins, a very high figure for three days; but a large portion of that sum was cash advanced by the landlord. I immediately felt that my honour demanded that I should pay the bill in full; and I paid without any hesitation, taking care to get a receipt given in the presence of two witnesses. I then made a present of two sequins to the nephew of the landlord to console him for the thrashing he had received, and I refused the same sum to the wretched C——, who had sent the landlady to beg it for her.

Thus ended that unpleasant adventure, which taught me a lesson, and a lesson which I ought not to have required. Two or three weeks later, I heard that Count Trento had given those two miserable beings some money to enable them to

leave the city; as far as I was concerned, I would not have anything to do with them. A month afterwards P—— C—— was again arrested for debt, the man who had been security for him having become a bankrupt. He had the audacity to write a long letter to me, entreating me to go and see him, but I did not answer him. I was quite as inflexible towards Madame C——, whom I always refused to see. She was reduced to great poverty.

I returned to Padua, where I stopped only long enough to take my ring and to dine with M. de Bragadin, who went back to Venice a few days afterwards.

The messenger from the convent brought me a letter very early in the morning; I devoured its contents; it was very loving, but gave no news. In my answer I gave my dear C—— C—— the particulars of the infamous trick played upon me by her villainous brother, and mentioned the ring, with the secret of which I acquainted her.

According to the information I had received from C—— C——, I placed myself, one morning, so as to see her mother enter the church, into which I followed her. Kneeling close to her, I told her that I wished to speak with her, and she followed me to the cloister. I began by speaking a few consoling words; then I told her that I would remain faithful to her daughter, and I asked her whether she visited her.

"I intend," she said, "to go and kiss my dear child next Sunday, and I shall of course speak of you with her, for I know well enough that she will be delighted to have news of you; but to my great regret I am not at liberty to tell you where she is."

"I do not wish you to tell me, my good mother, but allow me to send her this ring by you. It is the picture of her patroness, and I wish you to entreat her to wear it always on her finger; tell her to look at the image during her daily prayers, for without that protection she can never become my wife. Tell her that, on my side, I address every day a *credo* to St. James."

De lighted with the piety of my feelings and with the prospect of recommending this new devotion to her daughter, the good woman promised to fulfil my commission. I left her, but not before I had placed in her hand ten sequins which I begged her to force upon her daughter's acceptance to supply herself with the trifles she might require. She accepted, but at the same time she assured me that her father had taken care to provide her with all necessaries.

The letter which I received from C—— C——, on the following Wednesday, was the expression of the most tender affection and the most lively gratitude. She said that the moment she was alone nothing could be more rapid than the point of the pin which made St. Catherine cut a

somersault, and presented to her eager eyes the beloved features of the being who was the whole world to her.

"I am constantly kissing you," she added, "even when some of the nuns are looking at me, for whenever they come near me I have only to let the top part of the ring fall back and my dear patroness takes care to conceal everything. All the nuns are highly pleased with my devotion and with the confidence I have in the protection of my blessed patroness, whom they think very much like me in the face."

It was nothing but a beautiful face created by the fancy of the painter, but my dear little wife was so lovely that beauty was sure to be like her.

She said, likewise, that the nun who taught her French had offered her fifty sequins for the ring on account of the likeness between her and the portrait of the saint, but not out of veneration for her patroness, whom she turned into ridicule as she read her life. She thanked me for the ten sequins I had sent her, because, her mother having given them to her in the presence of several of the sisters, she was thus enabled to spend a little money without raising the suspicions of those curious and inquisitive nuns. She liked to offer trifling presents to the other boarders, and the money allowed her to gratify that innocent taste.

"My mother," added she, "praised your piety very highly; she is delighted with your feelings of

devotion. Never mention again, I beg, the name of my unworthy brother."

For five or six weeks her letters were full of the blessed St. Catherine, who caused her to tremble with fear every time she found herself compelled to trust the ring to the mystic curiosity of the elderly nuns, who, in order to see the likeness better through their spectacles, brought it close to their eyes, and rubbed the enamel.

"I am in constant fear," C—— C—— wrote, "of their pressing the invisible blue spot by chance. What would become of me, if my patroness, jumping up, discovered to their eyes a face—very divine, it is true, but which is not at all like that of a saint? Tell me, what could I do in such a case?"

One month after the second arrest of P—— C——, the jeweller, who had taken my security for the ring, called on me for payment of the bill. I made an arrangement with him; and on condition of my giving him twenty sequins, and leaving him every right over the debtor, he exonerated me. From his prison the impudent P—— C—— harassed me with his cowardly entreaties for alms and assistance.

Croce was in Venice, and engrossed a great share of the general attention. He kept a fine house, an excellent table, and a faro bank with which he emptied the pockets of his dupes. Foreseeing what would happen sooner or later, I had

abstained from visiting him at his house, but we were friendly whenever we met. His wife having been delivered of a boy, Croce asked me to stand as god-father, a favour which I thought I could grant; but after the ceremony and the supper which was the consequence of it, I never entered the house of my former partner, and I acted rightly. I wish I had always been as prudent in my conduct.

CHAPTER XV

CROCE IS EXPELLED FROM VENICE—SGOMBRO—HIS INFAMY AND DEATH—MISFORTUNE WHICH BEFALLS MY DEAR C. C.—I RECEIVE AN ANONYMOUS LETTER FROM A NUN, AND ANSWER IT—AN AMOROUS INTRIGUE

My former partner was, as I have said before, a skilful and experienced hand at securing the favours of Fortune; he was driving a good trade in Venice, and as he was amiable, and what is called in society a gentleman, he might have held that excellent footing for a long time, if he had been satisfied with gambling; for the State Inquisitors would have too much to attend to if they wished to compel fools to spare their fortunes, dupes to be prudent, and cheats not to dupe the fools; but, whether through the folly of youth or through a vicious disposition, the cause of his exile was of an extraordinary and disgusting nature.

A Venetian nobleman, noble by birth, but very ignoble in his propensities, called Sgombro, and belonging to the Gritti family, fell deeply in love

with him, and Croce, either for fun or from taste, shewed himself very compliant. Unfortunately the reserve commanded by common decency was not a guest at their amorous feats, and the scandal became so notorious that the Government was compelled to notify to Croce the order to quit the city, and to seek his fortune in some other place.

Some time afterwards the infamous Sgombro seduced his own two sons, who were both very young, and, unfortunately for him, he put the youngest in such a state as to render necessary an application to a surgeon. The infamous deed became publicly known, and the poor child confessed that he had not had the courage to refuse obedience to his father. Such obedience was, as a matter of course, not considered as forming a part of the duties which a son owes to his father, and the State Inquisitors sent the disgusting wretch to the citadel of Cataro, where he died after one year of confinement.

It is well known that the air of Cataro is deadly, and that the Tribunal sentences to inhale it only such criminals as are not judged publicly for fear of exciting too deeply the general horror by the publication of the trial.

It was to Cataro that the Council of Ten sent, fifteen years ago, the celebrated advocate Cantarini, a Venetian nobleman, who by his eloquence had made himself master of the great Council, and was on the point of changing the constitution of

the State. He died there at the end of the year. As for his accomplices, the Tribunal thought that it was enough to punish the four or five leaders, and to pretend not to know the others, who through fear of punishment returned silently to their allegiance.

That Sgombro, of whom I spoke before, had a charming wife who is still alive, I believe. Her name was Cornelia Gitti; she was as celebrated by her wit as by her beauty, which she kept in spite of her years. Having recovered her liberty through the death of her husband, she knew better than to make herself a second time the prisoner of the Hymenean god; she loved her independence too much; but as she loved pleasure too, she accepted the homage of the lovers who pleased her taste.

One Monday, towards the end of July, my servant woke me at day-break to tell me that Laura wished to speak to me. I foresaw some misfortune, and ordered the servant to shew her in immediately. These are the contents of the letter which she handed to me:

"My dearest, a misfortune has befallen me last evening, and it makes me very miserable because I must keep it a secret from everyone in the convent. I am suffering from a very severe loss of blood, and I do not know what to do, having but very little linen. Laura tells me I shall require a great deal of it if the flow of blood

continues. I can take no one into my confidence but you, and I entreat you to send me as much linen as you can. You see that I have been compelled to make a confidante of Laura, who is the only person allowed to enter my room at all times. If I should die, my dear husband, everybody in the convent would, of course, know the cause of my death; but I think of you, and I shudder. What will you do in your grief? Ah, darling love! what a pity!"

I dressed myself hurriedly, plying Laura with questions all the time. She told me plainly that it was a miscarriage, and that it was necessary to act with great discretion in order to save the reputation of my young friend; that after all she required nothing but plenty of linen, and that it would be nothing. Commonplace words of consolation, which did not allay the fearful anxiety under which I was labouring. I went out with Laura, called on a Jew from whom I bought a quantity of sheets and two hundred napkins, and, putting it all in a large bag, I repaired with her to Muran. On our way there I wrote in pencil to my sweetheart, telling her to have entire confidence in Laura, and assuring her that I would not leave Muran until all danger had passed. Before we landed, Laura told me that, in order not to be remarked, I had better conceal myself in her house. At any other time it would have been shutting up the wolf in the sheep-fold. She left me in a miser-

able-looking small room on the ground floor, and concealing about herself as much linen as she could she hurried to her patient, whom she had not seen since the previous evening. I was in hopes that she would find her out of danger, and I longed to see her come back with that good news.

She was absent about one hour, and when she returned her looks were sad. She told me that my poor friend, having lost a great deal of blood during the night, was in bed in a very weak state, and that all we could do was to pray to God for her, because, if the flooding of the blood did not stop soon, she could not possibly live twenty-four hours.

When I saw the linen which she had concealed under her clothes to bring it out, I could not disguise my horror, and I thought the sight would kill me. I fancied myself in a slaughter-house! Laura, thinking of consoling me, told me that I could rely upon the secret being well kept.

"Ah! what do I care!" I exclaimed. "Provided she lives, let the whole world know that she is my wife!"

At any other time, the foolishness of poor Laura would have made me laugh; but in such a sad moment I had neither the inclination nor the courage to be merry.

"Our dear patient," added Laura, "smiled as she was reading your letter, and she said that, with you so near her, she was certain not to die."

Those words did me good, but a man needs so little to console him or to soothe his grief.

"When the nuns are at their dinner," said Laura, "I will go back to the convent with as much linen as I can conceal about me, and in the mean time I am going to wash all this."

"Has she had any visitors?"

"Oh, yes! all the convent; but no one has any suspicion of the truth."

"But in such hot weather as this she can have only a very light blanket over her, and her visitors must remark the great bulk of the napkins."

"There is no fear of that, because she is sitting up in her bed."

"What does she eat?"

"Nothing, for she must not eat."

Soon afterwards Laura went out, and I followed her. I called upon a physician, where I wasted my time and my money, in order to get from him a long prescription which was useless, for it would have put all the convent in possession of the secret, or, to speak more truly, her secret would have been known to the whole world, for a secret known to a nun soon escapes out of the convent's walls. Besides, the physician of the convent himself would most likely have betrayed it through a spirit of revenge.

I returned sadly to my miserable hole in Laura's house. Half an hour afterwards she came

to me, crying bitterly, and she placed in my hands this letter, which was scarcely legible:

"I have not strength enough to write to you, my darling; I am getting weaker and weaker; I am losing all my blood, and I am afraid there is no remedy. I abandon myself to the will of God, and I thank Him for having saved me from dishonour. Do not make yourself unhappy. My only consolation is to know that you are near me. Alas! if I could see you but for one moment I would die happy."

The sight of a dozen napkins brought by Laura made me shudder, and the good woman imagined that she afforded me some consolation by telling me that as much linen could be soaked with a bottle of blood. My mind was not disposed to taste such consolation; I was in despair, and I addressed to myself the fiercest reproaches, upbraiding myself as the cause of the death of that adorable creature. I threw myself on the bed, and remained there, almost stunned, for more than six hours, until Laura's return from the convent with twenty napkins entirely soaked. Night had come on, and she could not go back to her patient until morning. I passed a fearful night without food, without sleep, looking upon myself with horror, and refusing all the kind attentions that Laura's daughters tried to shew me.

It was barely daylight when Laura came to announce to me, in the saddest tone, that my poor

friend did not bleed any more. I thought she was dead, and I screamed loudly,—

"Oh! she is no more!"

"She is still breathing, sir; but I fear she will not outlive this day, for she is worn out. She can hardly open her eyes, and her pulse is scarcely to be felt."

A weight was taken off me; I was instinctively certain that my darling was saved.

"Laura," I said, "this is not bad news; provided the flooding has ceased entirely, all that is necessary is to give her some light food."

"A physician has been sent for. He will prescribe whatever is right, but to tell you the truth I have not much hope."

"Only give me the assurance that she is still alive."

"Yes, she is, I assure you; but you understand very well that she will not tell the truth to the doctor, and God knows what he will order. I whispered to her not to take anything, and she understood me."

"You are the best of women. Yes, if she does not die from weakness before to-morrow, she is saved; nature and love will have been her doctors."

"May God hear you! I shall be back by twelve."

"Why not before?"

"Because her room will be full of people."

Feeling the need of hope, and almost dead for want of food, I ordered some dinner, and prepared a long letter for my beloved mistress, to be delivered to her when she was well enough to read it. The instants given to repentance are very sad, and I was truly a fit subject for pity. I longed to see Laura again, so as to hear what the doctor had said. I had very good cause for laughing at all sorts of oracles, yet through some unaccountable weakness I longed for that of the doctor; I wanted, before all, to find it a propitious one.

Laura's young daughters waited upon me at dinner; I could not manage to swallow a mouthful, but it amused me to see the three sisters devour my dinner at the first invitation I gave them. The eldest sister, a very fine girl, never raised her large eyes once towards me. The two younger ones seemed to me disposed to be amiable, but if I looked at them it was only to feed my despair and the cruel pangs of repentance.

At last Laura, whom I expected anxiously, came back; she told me that the dear patient remained in the same state of debility; the doctor had been greatly puzzled by her extreme weakness because he did not know to what cause to attribute it. Laura added,—

"He has ordered some restoratives and a small quantity of light broth; if she can sleep, he answers for her life. He has likewise desired her to have someone to watch her at night, and

she immediately pointed her finger at me, as if she wished me to undertake that office. Now, I promise you never to leave her either night or day, except to bring you news."

I thanked her, assuring her that I would reward her generously. I heard with great pleasure that her mother had paid her a visit, and that she had no suspicion of the real state of things, for she had lavished on her the most tender caresses.

Feeling more at ease I gave six sequins to Laura, one to each of her daughters, and ate something for my supper: I then laid myself down on one of the wretched beds in the room. As soon as the two younger sisters saw me in bed, they undressed themselves without ceremony, and took possession of the second bed which was close by mine. Their innocent confidence pleased me. The eldest sister, who most likely had more practical experience, retired to the adjoining room; she had a lover to whom she was soon to be married. This time, however, I was not possessed with the evil spirit of concupiscence, and I allowed innocence to sleep peacefully without attempting anything against it.

Early the next morning Laura was the bearer of good news. She came in with a cheerful air to announce that the beloved patient had slept well, and that she was going back soon to give her some soup. I felt an almost maddening joy in listening to her, and I thought the oracle of Æsculapius a

thousand times more reliable than that of Apollo. But it was not yet time to exult in our victory, for my poor little friend had to recover her strength and to make up for all the blood she had lost; that could be done only by time and careful nursing. I remained another week at Laura's house, which I left only after my dear C—— C—— had requested me to do so in a letter of four pages.

Laura, when I left, wept for joy in seeing herself rewarded by the gift of all the fine linen I had bought for my C—— C——, and her daughters were weeping likewise, most probably because, during the ten days I had spent near them, they had not obtained a single kiss from me.

After my return to Venice, I resumed my usual habits; but with a nature like mine how could I possibly remain satisfied without positive love? My only pleasure was to receive a letter from my dear recluse every Wednesday, who advised me to wait patiently rather than to attempt carrying her off. Laura assured me that she had become more lovely than ever, and I longed to see her. An opportunity of gratifying my wishes soon offered itself, and I did not allow it to escape. There was to be a taking of the veil—a ceremony which always attracts a large number of persons. On those occasions the nuns always received a great many visitors, and I thought that the boarders were likely to be in the parlour on such an occasion. I ran no risk of being remarked any more than any

other person, for I would mingle with the crowd. I therefore went without saying anything about it to Laura, and without acquainting my dear little wife of my intentions. I thought I would fall, so great was my emotion, when I saw her within four yards from me, and looking at me as if she had been in an ecstatic state. I thought her taller and more womanly, and she certainly seemed to me more beautiful than before. I saw no one but her; she never took her eyes off me, and I was the last to leave that place which on that day struck me as being the temple of happiness.

Three days afterwards I received a letter from her. She painted with such vivid colours the happiness she had felt in seeing me, that I made up my mind to give her that pleasure as often as I could. I answered at once that I would attend mass every Sunday at the church of her convent. It cost me nothing: I could not see her, but I knew that she saw me herself, and her happiness made me perfectly happy. I had nothing to fear, for it was almost impossible that anyone could recognize me in the church which was attended only by the people of Muran.

After hearing two or three masses, I used to take a gondola, the gondolier of which could not feel any curiosity about me. Yet I kept on my guard, for I knew that the father of C—— C—— wanted her to forget me, and I had no doubt he would have taken her away, God knew where! if

he had had the slightest suspicion of my being acquainted with the place where he had confined her.

Thus was I reasoning in my fear to lose all opportunity of corresponding with my dear C—— C——, but I did not yet know the disposition and the shrewdness of the sainted daughters of the Lord. I did not suppose that there was anything remarkable in my person, at least for the inmates of a convent; but I was yet a novice respecting the curiosity of women, and particularly of unoccupied hearts; I had soon occasion to be convinced.

I had executed my Sunday manœuvring only for a month or five weeks, when my dear C—— C—— wrote me jestingly that I had become a living enigma for all the convent, boarders and nuns, not even excepting the old ones. They all expected me anxiously; they warned each other of my arrival, and watched me taking the holy water. They remarked that I never cast a glance towards the grating, behind which were all the inmates of the convent; that I never looked at any of the women coming in or going out of the church. The old nuns said that I was certainly labouring under some deep sorrow, of which I had no hope to be cured except through the protection of the Holy Virgin, and the young ones asserted that I was either melancholy or misanthropic.

My dear wife, who knew better than the others,

and had no occasion to lose herself in suppositions, was much amused, and she entertained me by sending me a faithful report of it all. I wrote to her that, if she had any fear of my being recognized I would cease my Sunday visits to the church. She answered that I could not impose upon her a more cruel privation, and she entreated me to continue my visits. I thought it would be prudent, however, to abstain from calling at Laura's house, for fear of the chattering nuns contriving to know it, and discovering in that manner a great deal more than I wished them to find out. But that existence was literally consuming me by slow degrees, and could not last long. Besides, I was made to have a mistress, and to live happily with her. Not knowing what to do with myself, I would gamble, and I almost invariably won; but, in spite of that, weariness had got hold of me and I was getting thinner every day.

With the five thousand sequins which my partner Croce had won for me in Padua I had followed M. Bragadin's advice. I had hired a casino where I held a faro bank in partnership with a matador, who secured me against the frauds of certain noblemen—tyrants, with whom a private citizen is always sure to be in the wrong in my dear country.

On All Saints' Day, in the year 1753, just as, after hearing mass, I was going to step into a gondola to return to Venice, I saw a woman, some-

what in Laura's style who, passing near me, looked at me and dropped a letter. I picked it up, and the woman, seeing me in possession of the epistle, quietly went on. The letter had no address, and the seal represented a running knot. I stepped hurriedly into the gondola, and as soon as we were in the offing I broke the seal. I read the following words:

"A nun, who for the last two months and a half has seen you every Sunday in the church of her convent, wishes to become acquainted with you. A pamphlet which you have lost, and which chance has thrown into her hands, makes her believe that you speak French; but, if you like it better, you can answer in Italian, because what she wants above all is a clear and precise answer. She does not invite you to call for her at the parlour of the convent, because, before you place yourself under the necessity of speaking to her, she wishes you to see her, and for that purpose she will name a lady whom you can accompany to the parlour. That lady shall not know you and need not therefore introduce you, in case you should not wish to be known.

"Should you not approve of that way to become acquainted, the nun will appoint a certain casino in Muran, in which you will find her alone, in the evening, any night you may choose. You will then be at liberty either to sup with her, or to retire after an interview of a quarter of an hour, if you have any other engagements.

"Would you rather offer her a supper in Venice? Name the night, the hour, the place of appointment, and you will see her come out of a gondola. Only be careful to be there alone, masked and with a lantern.

"I feel certain that you will answer me, and that you will guess how impatiently I am waiting for your letter. I entreat you, therefore, to give it to-morrow to the same woman through whom you will receive mine; you will find her one hour before noon in the church of St. Cancian, near the first altar on the right.

"Recollect that, if I did not suppose you endowed with a noble soul and a high mind, I could never have resolved on taking a step which might give you an unfavourable opinion of my character."

The tone of that letter, which I have copied word by word, surprised me even more than the offer it contained. I had business to attend to, but I gave up all engagements to lock myself in my room in order to answer it. Such an application betokened an extravagant mind, but there was in it a certain dignity, a singularity, which attracted me. I had an idea that the writer might be the same nun who taught French to C—— C——. She had represented her friend in her letters as handsome, rich, gallant, and generous. My dear wife had, perhaps, been guilty of some indiscretion. A thousand fancies whirled through my brain, but

I would entertain only those which were favourable to a scheme highly pleasing to me. Besides, my young friend had informed me that the nun who had given her French lessons was not the only one in the convent who spoke that language. I had no reason to suppose that, if C—— C—— had made a confidante of her friend, she would have made a mystery of it to me. But, for all that, the nun who had written to me might be the beautiful friend of my dear little wife, and she might also turn out to be a different person; I felt somewhat puzzled. Here is, however, the letter which I thought I could write without implicating myself:

"I answer in French, madam, in the hope that my letter will have the clearness and the precision of which you give me the example in yours.

"The subject is highly interesting and of the highest importance, considering all the circumstances. As I must answer without knowing the person to whom I am writing, you must feel, madam, that, unless I should possess a large dose of vanity, I must fear some mystification, and my honour requires that I should keep on my guard.

"If it is true that the person who has penned that letter is a respectable woman, who renders me justice in supposing me endowed with feeling as noble as her own, she will find, I trust, that I could not answer in any other way than I am doing now.

"If you have judged me worthy, madam, of

the honour which you do me by offering me your acquaintance, although your good opinion can have been formed only from my personal appearance, I feel it my duty to obey you, even if the result be to undeceive you by proving that I had unwittingly led you into a mistaken appreciation of my person.

"Of the three proposals which you so kindly made in your letter, I dare not accept any but the first, with the restriction suggested by your penetrating mind. I will accompany to the parlour of your convent a lady who shall not know who I am, and, consequently, shall have no occasion to introduce me.

"Do not judge too severely, madam, the specious reasons which compel me not to give you my name, and receive my word of honour that I shall learn yours only to render you homage. If you choose to speak to me, I will answer with the most profound respect. Permit me to hope that you will come to the parlour alone. I may mention that I am a Venetian, and perfectly free. The only reason which prevents me from choosing one of the two other arrangements proposed by you, either of which would have suited me better because they greatly honour me, is, allow me to repeat it, a fear of being the victim of a mystification; but these modes of meeting will not be lost when you know me and when I have seen you. I entreat you to have faith in my honour, and to measure my patience by your own. To-morrow,

at the same place and at the same hour, I shall be anxiously expecting your answer."

I went to the place appointed, and having met the female Mercury I gave her my letter with a sequin, and I told her that I would come the next day for the answer. We were both punctual. As soon as she saw me, she handed me back the sequin which I had given her the day before, and a letter, requesting me to read it and to let her know whether she was to wait for an answer. Here is the exact copy of the letter:

"I believe, sir, that I have not been mistaken in anything. Like you, I detest untruth when it can lead to important consequences, but I think it a mere trifle when it can do no injury to anyone. Of my three proposals you have chosen the one which does the greatest honour to your intelligence, and, respecting the reasons which induce you to keep your incognito, I have written the enclosed to the Countess of S——, which I request you to read. Be kind enough to seal it before delivery it to her. You may call upon her whenever convenient to yourself. She will name her own hour, and you will accompany her here in her gondola. The countess will not ask you any questions, and you need not give her any explanation. There will be no presentation; but as you will be made acquainted with my name, you can afterwards call on me here, masked, whenever you please, and by using the name of the countess. In that way we

shall become acquainted without the necessity of disturbing you, or of your losing at night some hours which may be precious to you. I have instructed my servant to wait for your answer in case you should be known to the countess and object to her. If you approve of the choice I have made of her, tell the messenger that there is no answer."

As I was an entire stranger to the countess, I told the woman that I had no answer to give, and she left me.

Here are the contents of the note addressed by the nun to the countess, and which I had to deliver to her:

"I beg of you, my dear friend, to pay me a visit when you are at leisure, and to let the masked gentleman—bearer of this note—know the hour, so that he can accompany you. He will be punctual. Farewell. You will much oblige your friend."

That letter seemed to me informed by a sublime spirit of intrigue; there was in it an appearance of dignity which captivated me, although I felt conscious that I was playing the character of a man on whom a favour seemed to be bestowed.

In her last letter, my nun, pretending not to be anxious to know who I was, approved of my choice, and feigned indifference for nocturnal meetings; but she seemed certain that after seeing her I would visit her. I knew very well

what to think of it all, for the intrigue was sure to have an amorous issue. Nevertheless, her assurance, or rather confidence, increased my curiosity, and I felt that she had every reason to hope, if she were young and handsome. I might very well have delayed the affair for a few days, and have learned from C—— C—— who that nun could be; but, besides the baseness of such a proceeding, I was afraid of spoiling the game and repenting it afterwards. I was told to call on the countess at my convenience, but it was because the dignity of my nun would not allow her to shew herself too impatient; and she certainly thought that I would myself hasten the adventure. She seemed to me too deeply learned in gallantry to admit the possibility of her being an inexperienced novice, and I was afraid of wasting my time; but I made up my mind to laugh at my own expense if I happened to meet a superannuated female. It is very certain that if I had not been actuated by curiosity I should not have gone one step further, but I wanted to see the countenance of a nun who had offered to come to Venice to sup with me. Besides, I was much surprised at the liberty enjoyed by those sainted virgins, and at the facility with which they could escape out of their walls.

At three o'clock I presented myself before the countess and delivered the note, and she expressed a wish to see me the next day at the

same hour. We dropped a beautiful reverence to one another, and parted. She was a superior woman, already going down the hill, but still very handsome.

The next morning, being Sunday, I need not say that I took care to attend mass at the convent, elegantly dressed, and already unfaithful—at least in idea—to my dear C—— C——, for I was thinking of being seen by the nun, young or old, rather than of shewing myself to my charming wife.

In the afternoon I masked myself again, and at the appointed time I repaired to the house of the countess who was waiting for me. We went in a two-oared gondola, and reached the convent without having spoken of anything but the weather. When we arrived at the gate, the countess asked for M—— M——. I was surprised by that name, for the woman to whom it belonged was celebrated. We were shewn into a small parlour, and a few minutes afterwards a nun came in, went straight to the grating, touched a spring, and made four squares of the grating revolve, which left an opening sufficiently large to enable the two friends to embrace: the ingenious window was afterwards carefully closed. The opening was at least eighteen inches wide, and a man of my size could easily have got through it. The countess sat opposite the nun, and I took my seat a little on one side so as to be able to observe quietly

and at my ease one of the most beautiful women that it was possible to see. I had no doubt whatever of her being the person mentioned by my dear C—— C—— as teaching her French. Admiration kept me in a sort of ecstacy, and I never heard one word of their conversation; the beautiful nun, far from speaking to me, did not even condescend to honour me with one look. She was about twenty-two or twenty-three years of age, and the shape of her face was most beautiful. Her figure was much above the ordinary height, her complexion rather pale, her appearance noble, full of energy, but at the same time reserved and modest; her eyes, large and full, were of a lovely blue; her countenance was soft and cheerful; her fine lips seemed to breathe the most heavenly voluptuousness, and her teeth were two rows of the most brilliant enamel. Her head-dress did not allow me to see her hair, but if she had any I knew by the colour of her eyebrows that it was of a beautiful light brown. Her hand and her arm, which I could see as far as the elbow, were magnificent; the chisel of Praxiteles never carved anything more gracefully rounded and plump, I was not sorry to have refused the two rendezvous which had been offered to me by the beauty, for I was sure of possessing her in a few days, and it was a pleasure for me to lay my desires at her feet. I longed to find

myself alone with her near that grating, and I would have considered it an insult to her if, the very next day, I had not come to tell her how fully I rendered to her charms the justice they deserved. She was faithful to her determination not to look at me once, but after all I was pleased with her reserve. All at once the two friends lowered their voices, and out of delicacy I withdrew further. Their private conversation lasted about a quarter of an hour, during which I pretended to be intently looking at a painting; then they kissed one another again by the same process as at the beginning of the interview; the nun closed the opening, turned her back on us, and disappeared without casting one glance in my direction.

As we were on our way back to Venice, the countess, tired perhaps of our silence, said to me, with a smile,—

"M—— M—— is beautiful and very witty."

"I have seen her beauty, and I believe in her wit."

"She did not address one word to you."

"I had refused to be introduced to her, and she punished me by pretending not to know that I was present."

The countess made no answer, and we reached her house without exchanging another word. At her door a very ceremonious curtesy, with these words, "Adieu, sir!" warned me that I was not

to go any further. I had no wish to do so, and went away dreaming and wondering at the singularity of the adventure, the end of which I longed to see.

CHAPTER XVI

COUNTESS CORONINI—A LOVER'S PIQUE—RECONCILIATION—THE FIRST MEETING—A PHILOSOPHICAL PARENTHESIS

My beautiful nun had not spoken to me, and I was glad of it, for I was so astonished, so completely under the spell of her beauty, that I might have given her a very poor opinion of my intelligence by the rambling answers which I should very likely have given to her questions. I knew her to be certain that she had not to fear the humiliation of a refusal from me, but I admired her courage in running the risk of it in her position. I could hardly understand her boldness, and I could not conceive how she contrived to enjoy so much liberty. A casino at Muran! the possibility of going to Venice to sup with a young man! it was all very surprising, and I decided in my own mind that she had an acknowledged lover whose pleasure it was to make her happy by satisfying her caprices. It is true that such a thought was rather unpleasant to my pride, but there was too much

piquancy in the adventure, the heroine of it was too attractive, for me to be stopped by any considerations. I saw very well that I was taking the high road to become unfaithful to my dear C—— C——, or rather that I was already so in thought and will, but I must confess that, in spite of all my love for that charming child, I felt no qualms of conscience. It seemed to me that an infidelity of that sort, if she ever heard of it, would not displease her, for that short excursion on strange ground would only keep me alive and in good condition for her, because it would save me from the weariness which was surely killing me.

I had been presented to the celebrated Countess Coronini by a nun, a relative of M. Dandolo. That countess, who had been very handsome and was very witty, having made up her mind to renounce the political intrigues which had been the study of her whole life, had sought a retreat in the Convent of St. Justine, in the hope of finding in that refuge the calm which she wanted, and which her disgust of society had rendered necessary to her. As she had enjoyed a very great reputation, she was still visited at the convent by all the foreign ambassadors and by the first noblemen of Venice; inside of the walls of her convent the countess was acquainted with everything that happened in the city. She always received me very kindly, and, treating me as a young man, she took pleasure in giving me, every time I called

on her, very agreeable lessons in morals. Being quite certain to find out from her, with a little manœuvring, something concerning M—— M——, I decided on paying her a visit the day after I had seen the beautiful nun.

The countess gave me her usual welcome, and, after the thousand nothings which it is the custom to utter in society before anything worth saying is spoken, I led the conversation up to the convents of Venice. We spoke of the wit and influence of a nun called Celsi, who, although ugly, had an immense credit everywhere and in everything. We mentioned afterwards the young and lovely Sister Michali, who had taken the veil to prove to her mother that she was superior to her in intelligence and wit. After speaking of several other nuns who had the reputation of being addicted to gallantry, I named M—— M——, remarking that most likely she deserved that reputation likewise, but that she was an enigma. The countess answered with a smile that she was not an enigma for everybody, although she was necessarily so for most people.

"What is incomprehensible," she said, "is the caprice that she took suddenly to become a nun, being handsome, rich, free, well-educated, full of wit, and, to my knowledge, a Free-thinker. She took the veil without any reason, physical or moral; it was a mere caprice."

"Do you believe her to be happy, madam?"

"Yes, unless she has repented her decision, or if she does not repent it some day. But if ever she does, I think she will be wise enough never to say so to anyone."

Satisfied by the mysterious air of the countess that M—— M—— had a lover, I made up my mind not to trouble myself about it, and having put on my mask I went to Muran in the afternoon. When I reached the gate of the convent I rang the bell, and with an anxious heart I asked for M—— M—— in the name of Madame de S——. The small parlour being closed, the attendant pointed out to me the one in which I had to go. I went in, took off my mask, and sat down waiting for my divinity.

My heart was beating furiously; I was waiting with great impatience; yet that expectation was not without charm, for I dreaded the beginning of the interview. An hour passed pretty rapidly, but I began then to find the time rather long, and thinking that, perhaps, the attendant had not rightly understood me, I rang the bell, and enquired whether notice of my visit had being given to Sister M—— M——. A voice answered affirmatively. I took my seat again, and a few minutes afterwards an old, toothless nun came in and informed me that Sister M—— M—— was engaged for the whole day. Without giving me time to utter a single word, the woman left the parlour.

This was one of those terrible moments to

which the man who worships at the shrine of the god of love is exposed! They are indeed cruel moments; they bring fearful sorrow, they may cause death.

Feeling myself disgraced, my first sensation was utter contempt for myself, an inward dispair which was akin to rage; the second was disdainful indignation against the nun, upon whom I passed the severe judgment which I thought she deserved, and which was the only way I had to soothe my grief. Such behaviour proclaimed her to be the most impudent of women, and entirely wanting in good sense; for the two letters she had written to me were quite enough to ruin her character if I had wished to revenge myself, and she evidently could not expect anything else from me. She must have been mad to set at defiance my revengeful feelings, and I should certainly have thought that she was insane if I had not heard her converse with the countess.

Time, they say, brings good counsel; it certainly brings calm, and cool reflection gives lucidity to the mind. At last I persuaded myself that what had occurred was after all in no way extraordinary, and that I would certainly have considered it at first a very common occurrence if I had not been dazzled by the wonderful beauty of the nun, and blinded by my own vanity. As a very natural result I felt that I was at liberty to laugh at my mishap, and that nobody could possibly guess

whether my mirth was genuine or only counterfeit. Sophism is so officious!

But, in spite of all my fine arguments, I still cherished the thought of revenge; no debasing element, however, was to form part of it, and being determined not to leave the person who had been guilty of such a bad practical joke the slightest cause of triumph, I had the courage not to shew any vexation. She had sent word to me that she was engaged; nothing more natural; the part I had to play was to appear indifferent. "Most likely she will not be engaged another time," I said to myself, "but I defy her to catch me in the snare again. I mean to shew her that I only laugh at her uncivil behaviour." Of course I intended to send back her letters, but not without the accompaniment of a billet-doux, the gallantry of which was not likely to please her.

The worse part of the affair for me was to be compelled to go to her church; because, supposing her not to be aware of my going there for C—— C——, she might imagine that the only object of my visits was to give her the opportunity of apologizing for her conduct and of appointing a new meeting. I wanted her to entertain no doubt of my utter contempt for her person, and I felt certain that she had proposed the other meetings in Venice and at the casino of Muran only to deceive me more easily.

I went to bed with a great thirst for revenge,

I fell asleep thinking of it, and I awoke with the resolution of quenching it. I began to write, but, as I wished particularly that my letter should not show the pique of the disappointed lover, I left it on my table with the intention of reading it again the next day. It proved a useful precaution, for when I read it over, twenty-four hours afterwards, I found it unworthy of me, and tore it to pieces. It contained some sentences which savoured too much of my weakness, my love, and my spite, and which, far from humiliating her, would only have given her occasion to laugh at me.

On the Wednesday after I had written to C—— C—— that very serious reasons compelled me to give up my visits to the church of her convent, I wrote another letter to the nun, but on Thursday it had the same fate as the first, because upon a second perusal I found the same deficiencies. It seemed to me that I had lost the faculty of writing. Ten days afterwards I found out that I was too deeply in love to have the power of expressing myself in any other way than through the feelings of my heart.

Sincerium est nisi vas, quodcunque infundis acescit.

The face of M—— M—— had made too deep an impression on me; nothing could possibly obliterate it except the all-powerful influence of time.

In my ridiculous position I was sorely tempted to complain to Countess S——; but I am happy to say I was prudent enough not to cross the threshold

of her door. At last I bethought myself that the giddy nun was certainly labouring under constant dread, knowing that I had in my possession her two letters, with which I could ruin her reputation and cause the greatest injury to the convent, and I sent them back to her with the following note, after I had kept them ten days:

"I can assure you, madam, that it was owing only to forgetfulness that I did not return your two letters which you will find enclosed. I have never thought of belying my own nature by taking a cowardly revenge upon you, and I forgive you most willingly the two giddy acts of which you have been guilty, whether they were committed thoughtlessly or because you wanted to enjoy a joke at my expense. Nevertheless, you will allow me to advise you not to treat any other man in the same way, for you might meet with one endowed with less delicacy. I know your name, I know who you are, but you need not be anxious; it is exactly as if I did not know it. You may, perhaps, care but little for my discretion, but if it should be so I should greatly pity you.

"You may be aware that I shall not shew myself again at your church; but let me assure you that it is not a sacrifice on my part, and that I can attend mass anywhere else. Yet I must tell you why I shall abstain from frequenting the church of your convent. It is very natural for me to suppose that to the two thoughtless acts of which

you have been guilty, you have added another not less serious, namely, that of having boasted of your exploits with the other nuns, and I do not want to be the butt of your jokes in cell or parlour. Do not think me too ridiculous if, in spite of being five or six years older than you, I have not thrown off all feelings of self-respect, or trodden under my feet all reserve and propriety; in one word, if I have kept some prejudices, there are a few which in my opinion ought never to be forgotten. Do not disdain, madam, the lesson which I take the liberty to teach you, as I receive in the kindest spirit the one which you have given me, most likely only for the sake of fun, but by which I promise you to profit as long as I live."

I thought that, considering all circumstances, my letter was a very genial one; I made up my parcel, put on my mask, and looked out for a porter who could have no knowledge of me; I gave him half a sequin, and I promised him as much more when he could assure me that he had faithfully delivered my letter at the convent of Muran. I gave him all the necessary instructions, and cautioned him to go away the very moment he had delivered the letter at the gate of the convent, even if he were told to wait. I must say here that my messenger was a man from Forli, and that the Forlanese were then the most trustworthy men in Venice; for one of them to be guilty of a breach of trust was an unheard-of thing. Such were formerly the

Savoyards in Paris; but everything is getting worse in this world.

I was beginning to forget the adventure, probably because I thought, rightly or wrongly, that I had put an insurmountable barrier between the nun and myself, when, ten days after I had sent my letter, as I was coming out of the opera, I met my messenger, lantern in hand. I called him, and without taking off my mask I asked him whether he knew me. He looked at me, eyed me from head to foot, and finally answered that he did not.

"Did you faithfully carry the message to Muran?"

"Ah, sir! God be praised! I am very happy to see you again, for I have an important communication to make to you. I took your letter, delivered it according to your instructions, and I went away as soon as it was in the hands of the attendant, although she requested me to wait. When I returned from Muran I did not see you, but that did not matter. On the following day, one of my companions, who happened to be at the gate of the convent when I delivered your letter, came early in the morning to tell me to go to Muran, because the attendant wanted particularly to speak to me. I went there, and after waiting for a few minutes I was shewn into the parlour, where I was kept for more than an hour by a nun as beautiful as the light of day, who

asked me a thousand questions for the purpose of ascertaining, if not who you are, at least where I should be likely to find you. You know that I could not give her any satisfactory information. She then left the parlour, ordering me to wait, and at the end of two hours she came back with a letter which she entrusted to my hands, telling me that, if I succeeded in finding you out and in bringing her an answer, she would give me two sequins. In the mean time I was to call at the convent every day, shew her the letter, and receive forty sous every time. Until now I have earned twenty crowns, but I am afraid the lady will get tired of it, and you can make me earn two sequins by answering a line."

"Where is the letter?"

"In my room under lock and key, for I am always afraid of losing it."

"Then how can I answer?"

"If you will wait for me here, you shall have the letter in less than a quarter of an hour."

"I will not wait, because I do not care about the letter. But tell me how you could flatter the nun with the hope of finding me out? You are a rogue, for it is not likely that she would have trusted you with the letter if you had not promised her to find me."

"I am not a rogue, for I have done faithfully what you told me; but it is true that I gave her a description of your coat, your buckles, and your

figure, and I can assure you that for the last ten days I have examined all the masks who are about your size, but in vain. Now I recognize your buckles, but I do not think you have the same coat. Alas, sir! it will not cost you much to write only one line. Be kind enough to wait for me in the coffee-house close by."

I could not resist my curiosity any longer, and I made up my mind not to wait for him but to accompany him as far as his house. I had only to write, *"I have received the letter,"* and my curiosity was gratified and the Forlanese earned his two sequins. I could afterwards change my buckles and my mask, and thus set all enquiries at defiance.

I therefore followed him to his door; he went in and brought me the letter. I took him to an inn, where I asked for a room with a good fire, and I told my man to wait. I broke the seal of the parcel—a rather large one, and the first papers that I saw were the two letters which I had sent back to her in order to allay her anxiety as to the possible consequences of her giddiness.

The sight of these letters caused me such a palpitation of the heart that I was compelled to sit down: it was a most evident sign of my defeat. Besides these two letters I found a third one signed "S.," and addressed to M—— M——. I read the following lines:

"The mask who accompanied me back to my house would not, I believe, have uttered a single

word, if I had not told him that the charms of your witty mind were even more bewitching than those of your person; and his answer was, 'I have seen the one, and I believe in the other.' I added that I did not understand why you had not spoken to him, and he said, with a smile, 'I refused to be presented to her, and she punished me for it by not appearing to know that I was present.' These few words were all our dialogue. I intended to send you this note this morning, but found it impossible. Adieu."

After reading this note, which stated the exact truth, and which could be considered as proof, my heart began to beat less quickly. Delighted at seeing myself on the point of being convicted of injustice, I took courage, and I read the following letter:

"Owing to an excusable weakness, feeling curious to know what you would say about me to the countess after you had seen me, I took an opportunity of asking her to let me know all you said to her on the following day at latest, for I foresaw that you would pay me a visit in the afternoon. Her letter, which I enclose, and which I beg you to read, did not reach me till half an hour after you had left the convent.

"This was the first fatality.

"Not having received that letter when you called, I had not the courage to see you. This absurd weakness on my part was the second fa-

tality, but the weakness you will, I hope, forgive. I gave orders to the lay-sister to tell you that *I was ill for the whole day;* a very legitimate excuse, whether true or false, for it was an officious untruth, the corrective of which was to be found in the words *for the whole day.* You had already left the convent, and I could not possibly send anyone to run after you, when the old fool informed me of her having told you that I was *engaged.*

"This was the third fatality.

"You cannot imagine what I had a mind to do and to say to that foolish sister, but here one must say or do nothing; one must be patient and dissemble, thanking God when mistakes are the result of ignorance and not of wickedness—a very common thing in convents. I foresaw at once, at least partly, what would happen, and what has actually happened, for no reasonable being could, I believe, have foreseen it all. I guessed that, thinking yourself the victim of a joke, you would be incensed, and I felt miserable, for I did not see any way of letting you know the truth before the following Sunday. My heart longed ardently for that day. Could I possibly imagine that you would take a resolution not to come again to our church! I tried to be patient until that Sunday; but when I found myself disappointed in my hope, my misery became unbearable, and it will cause my death if you refuse to listen to my justification. Your letter has made me completely unhappy, and I

shall not resist my despair if you persist in the cruel resolve expressed by your unfeeling letter. You have considered yourself trifled with; that is all you can say; but will this letter convince you of your error? And even believing yourself deceived in the most scandalous manner, you must admit that to write such an awful letter you must have supposed me an abominable wretch —a monster, such as a woman of noble birth and of refined education cannot possibly be. I enclose the two letters you sent back to me, with the idea of allaying my fears which you cruelly supposed very different to what they are in reality. I am a better physiognomist than you, and you must be quite certain that I have not acted thoughtlessly, for I never thought you capable, I will not say of a crime, but even of an indelicate action. You must have read on my features the signs only of giddy impudence, and that is not my nature. You may be the cause of my death, you will certainly make me miserable for the remainder of my life, if you do not justify yourself; on my side I think the justification is complete.

"I hope that, even if you feel no interest in my life, you will think that you are bound in honour to come and speak to me. Come yourself to recall all you have written; it is your duty, and I deserve it. If you do not realize the fatal effect produced upon me by your letter, I must indeed

pity you, in spite of my misery, for it proves that you have not the slightest knowledge of the human heart. But I feel certain that you will come back, provided the man to whom I trust this letter contrives to find you. Adieu! I expect life or death from you."

I did not require to read that letter twice; I was ashamed and in despair. M—— M—— was right. I called the Forlanese, enquired from him whether he had spoken to her in the morning, and whether she looked ill. He answered that he had found her looking more unhappy every day, and that her eyes were red from weeping.

"Go down again and wait," I said to him.

I began to write, and I had not concluded my long screed before the dawn of day; here are, word by word, the contents of the letter which I wrote to the noblest of women, whom in my unreasonable spite I had judged so wrongly.

"I plead guilty, madam; I cannot possibly justify myself, and I am perfectly convinced of your innocence. I should be disconsolate if I did not hope to obtain pardon, and you will not refuse to forgive me if you are kind enough to recollect the cause of my guilt. I saw you; I was dazzled, and I could not realize a happiness which seemed to me a dream; I thought myself the prey of one of those delightful illusions which vanish when we wake up. The doubt under which I was labouring could not be cleared up for twenty-four

hours, and how could I express my feverish impatience as I was longing for that happy moment! It came at last! and my heart, throbbing with desire and hope, was flying towards you while I was in the parlour counting the minutes! Yet an hour passed almost rapidly, and not unnaturally, considering my impatience and the deep impression I felt at the idea of seeing you. But then, precisely at the very moment when I believed myself certain that I was going to gaze upon the beloved features which had been in one interview indelibly engraved upon my heart, I saw the most disagreeable face appear, and a creature announced that you were engaged for the whole day, and without giving me time to utter one word she disappeared! You may imagine my astonishment and . . . the rest. The lightning would not have produced upon me a more rapid, a more terrible effect! If you had sent me a line by that sister—a line from your hand—I would have gone away, if not pleased, at least submissive and resigned.

"But that was a fourth fatality which you have forgotten to add to your delightful and witty justification. Thinking myself scoffed at, my self-love rebelled, and indignation for the moment silenced love. Shame overwhelmed me! I thought that everybody could read on my face all the horror in my heart, and I saw in you, under the outward appearance of an angel,

nothing but a fearful daughter of the Prince of Darkness. My mind was thoroughly upset, and at the end of eleven days I lost the small portion of good sense that was left in me—at least I must suppose so, as it is then that I wrote to you the letter of which you have so good a right to complain, and which at that time seemed to me a masterpiece of moderation.

"But I hope it is all over now, and this very day at eleven o'clock you will see me at your feet—tender, submissive and repentant. You will forgive me, divine woman, or I will myself avenge you for the insult I have hurled at you. The only thing which I dare to ask from you as a great favour is to burn my first letter, and never to mention it again. I sent it only after I had written four, which I destroyed one after the other: you may therefore imagine the state of my heart.

"I have given orders to my messenger to go to your convent at once, so that my letter can be delivered to you as soon as you wake in the morning. He would never have discovered me, if my good angel had not made me go up to him at the door of the opera-house. But I shall not require his services any more: do not answer me, and receive all the devotion of a heart which adores you."

When my letter was finished, I called my Forlanese, gave him one sequin, and I made him

promise me to go to Muran immediately, and to deliver my letter only to the nun herself. As soon as he had gone I threw myself on my bed, but anxiety and burning impatience would not allow me to sleep.

I need not tell the reader who knows the state of excitement under which I was labouring, that I was punctual in presenting myself at the convent. I was shewn into the small parlour where I had seen her for the first time, and she almost immediately made her entrance. As soon as I saw her near the grating I fell on my knees, but she entreated me to rise at once as I might be seen. Her face was flushed with excitement, and her looks seemed to me heavenly. She sat down, and I took a seat opposite to her. We remained several minutes motionless, gazing at each other without speaking, but I broke the silence by asking her, in a voice full of love and anxiety, whether I could hope to obtain my pardon. She gave me her beautiful hand through the grating, and I covered it with tears and kisses.

"Our acquaintance," she said, "has begun with a violent storm; let us hope that we shall now enjoy it long in perfect and lasting calm. This is the first time that we speak to one another, but what has occurred must be enough to give us a thorough knowledge of each other. I trust that our intimacy will be as tender as sincere, and that we shall know how to have a mutual indulgence for our faults."

"Can such an angel as you have any?"

"Ah, my friend! who is without them?"

"When shall I have the happiness of convincing you of my devotion with complete freedom and in all the joy of my heart?"

"We will take supper together at my casino whenever you please, provided you give me notice two days beforehand; or I will go and sup with you in Venice, if it will not disturb your arrangements."

"It would only increase my happiness. I think it right to tell you that I am in very easy circumstances, and that, far from fearing expense, I delight in it: all I possess belongs to the woman I love."

"That confidence, my dear friend, is very agreeable to me, the more so that I have likewise to tell you that I am very rich, and that I could not refuse anything to my lover."

"But you must have a lover?"

"Yes; it is through him that I am rich, and he is entirely my master. I never conceal anything from him. The day after to-morrow, when I am alone with you, I will tell you more."

"But I hope that your lover. . . ."

"Will not be there? Certainly not. Have you a mistress?"

"I had one, but, alas! she has been taken from me by violent means, and for the last six months I have led a life of complete celibacy."

"Do you love her still?"

"I cannot think of her without loving her. She has almost as great charms, as great beauty, as you have; but I foresee that you will make me forget her."

"If your happiness with her was complete, I pity you. She has been violently taken from you, and you shun society in order to feed your sorrow. I have guessed right, have I not? But if I happen to take possession of her place in your heart, no one, my sweet friend, shall turn me out of it."

"But what will your lover say?"

"He will be delighted to see me happy with such a lover as you. It is in his nature."

"What an admirable nature! Such heroism is quite beyond me!"

"What sort of a life do you lead in Venice?"

"I live at the theatres, in society, in the casinos, where I fight against fortune sometimes with good sometimes with bad success."

"Do you visit the foreign ambassadors?"

"No, because I am too much acquainted with the nobility; but I know them all."

"How can you know them if you do not see them?"

"I have known them abroad. In Parma the Duke de Montalegre, the Spanish ambassador; in Vienna I knew Count Rosemberg; in Paris, about two years ago, the French ambassador."

"It is near twelve o'clock, my dear friend; it

is time for us to part. Come at the same hour the day after to-morrow, and I will give you all the instructions which you will require to enable you to come and sup with me."

"Alone?"

"Of course."

"May I venture to ask you for a pledge? The happiness which you promise me is so immense!"

"What pledge do you want?"

"To see you standing before that small window in the grating with permission for me to occupy the same place as Madame de S——."

She rose at once, and, with the most gracious smile, touched the spring; after a most expressive kiss, I took leave of her. She followed me with her eyes as far as the door, and her loving gaze would have rooted me to the spot if she had not left the room.

I spent the two days of expectation in a whirl of impatient joy, which prevented me from eating and sleeping; for it seemed to me that no other love had ever given me such happiness, or rather that I was going to be happy for the first time.

Irrespective of birth, beauty, and wit, which was the principal merit of my new conquest, prejudice was there to enhance a hundredfold my felicity, for she was a vestal: it was forbidden fruit, and who does not know that, from Eve down to our days, it was that fruit which has always appeared the most delicious! I was on the point of

encroaching upon the rights of an all-powerful husband; in my eyes M—— M—— was above all the queens of the earth.

If my reason had not been the slave of passion, I should have known that my nun could not be a different creature from all the pretty women whom I had loved for the thirteen years that I had been labouring in the fields of love. But where is the man in love who can harbour such a thought? If it presents itself too often to his mind, he expels it disdainfully! M—— M—— could not by any means be otherwise than superior to all other women in the wide world.

Animal nature, which chemists call the animal kingdom, obtains through instinct the three various means necessary for the perpetuation of its species.

There are three real wants which nature has implanted in all human creatures. They must feed themselves, and to prevent that task from being insipid and tedious they have the agreeable sensation of appetite, which they feel pleasure in satisfying. They must propagate their respective species; an absolute necessity which proves the wisdom of the Creator, since without reproduction all would be annihilated by the constant law of degradation, decay and death. And, whatever St. Augustine may say, human creatures would not perform the work of generation if they did not find pleasure in it, and if there was not in that

great work an irresistible attraction for them. In the third place, all creatures have a determined and invincible propensity to destroy their enemies; and it is certainly a very wise ordination, for that feeling of self-preservation makes it a duty for them to do their best for the destruction of whatever can injure them.

Each species obeys these laws in its own way. The three sensations—hunger, desire, and hatred—are in animals the satisfaction of habitual instinct, and cannot be called pleasures, for they can be so only in proportion to the intelligence of the individual. Man alone is gifted with the perfect organs which render real pleasure peculiar to him; because, being endowed with the sublime faculty of reason, he foresees enjoyment, looks for it, composes, improves, and increases it by thought and recollection. I entreat you, dear reader, not to get weary of following me in my ramblings; for now that I am but the shadow of the once brilliant Casanova, I love to chatter; and if you were to give me the slip, you would be neither polite nor obliging.

Man comes down to the level of beasts whenever he gives himself up to the three natural propensities without calling reason and judgment to his assistance; but when the mind gives perfect equilibrium to those propensities, the sensations derived from them become true enjoyment, an

unaccountable feeling which gives us what is called happiness, and which we experience without being able to describe it.

The voluptuous man who reasons, disdains greediness, rejects with contempt lust and lewdness, and spurns the brutal revenge which is caused by a first movement of anger: but he is dainty, and satisfies his appetite only in a manner in harmony with his nature and his tastes; he is amorous, but he enjoys himself with the object of his love only when he is certain that she will share his enjoyment, which can never be the case unless their love is mutual; if he is offended, he does not care for revenge until he has calmly considered the best means to enjoy it fully. If he is sometimes more cruel than necessary, he consoles himself with the idea that he has acted under the empire of reason; and his revenge is sometimes so noble that he finds it in forgiveness. Those three operations are the work of the soul which, to procure enjoyment for itself, becomes the agent of our passions. We sometimes suffer from hunger in order to enjoy better the food which will allay it; we delay the amorous enjoyment for the sake of making it more intense, and we put off the moment of our revenge in order to make it more certain. It is true, however, that one may die from indigestion, that we allow ourselves to be often deceived in love, and that

the creature we want to annhilate often escapes our revenge; but perfection cannot be attained in anything, and those are risks which we run most willingly.

CHAPTER XVII

CONTINUATION OF THE LAST CHAPTER—MY FIRST ASSIGNATION WITH M. M.—LETTER FROM C. C.—MY SECOND MEETING WITH THE NUN AT MY SPLENDID CASINO IN VENICE—I AM HAPPY

THERE is nothing, there can be nothing, dearer to a thinking being than life; yet the voluptuous men, those who try to enjoy it in the best manner, are the men who practise with the greatest perfection the difficult art of shortening life, of driving it fast. They do not mean to make it shorter, for they would like to perpetuate it in the midst of pleasure, but they wish enjoyment to render its course insensible; and they are right, provided they do not fail in fulfilling their duties. Man must not, however, imagine that he has no other duties but those which gratify his senses; he would be greatly mistaken, and he might fall the victim of his own error. I think that my friend Horace made a mistake when he said to Florus:

Nec metuam quid de me judicet heres,
Quod non plura datis inveniet.

The happiest man is the one who knows how to obtain the greatest sum of happiness without ever failing in the discharge of his duties, and the most unhappy is the man who has adopted a profession in which he finds himself constantly under the sad necessity of foreseeing the future.

Perfectly certain that M—— M—— would keep her word, I went to the convent at ten o'clock in the morning, and she joined me in the parlour as soon as I was announced.

"Good heavens!" she exclaimed, "are you ill?"

"No, but I may well look so, for the expectation of happiness wears me out. I have lost sleep and appetite, and if my felicity were to be deferred my life would be the forfeit."

"There shall be no delay, dearest; but how impatient you are! Let us sit down. Here is the key of my casino. You will find some persons in it, because we must be served; but nobody will speak to you, and you need not speak to anyone. You must be masked, and you must not go there till two hours after sunset; mind, not before. Then go up the stairs opposite the street-door, and at the top of those stairs you will see, by the light of a lamp, a green door which you will open to enter the apartment which you will find lighted. You will find me in the second room, and in case I should not be there you will wait for me a few minutes; you may rely upon my being punctual.

You can take off your mask in that room, and make yourself comfortable; you will find some books and a good fire."

The description could not be clearer; I kissed the hand which was giving me the key of that mysterious temple, and I enquired from the charming woman whether I should see her in her conventual garb.

"I always leave the convent with it," she said, "but I have at the casino a complete wardrobe to transform myself into an elegant woman of the world, and even to disguise myself."

"I hope you will do me the favour to remain in the dress of a nun."

"Why so, I beg?"

"I love to see you in that dress."

"Ah! ah! I understand. You fancy that my head is shaved, and you are afraid. But comfort yourself, dear friend, my wig is so beautifully made that it defies detection; it is nature itself."

"Oh, dear! what are you saying? The very name of wig is awful. But no, you may be certain that I will find you lovely under all circumstances. I only entreat you not to put on that cruel wig in my presence. Do I offend you? Forgive me; I am very sorry to have mentioned that subject. Are you sure that no one can see you leave the convent?"

"You will be sure of it yourself when you have gone round the island and seen the small door on

the shore. I have the key of a room opening on the shore, and I have every confidence in the sister who serves me."

"And the gondola?"

"My lover himself answers for the fidelity of the gondoliers."

"What a man that lover is! I fancy he must be an old man."

"You are mistaken; if he were old, I should be ashamed. He is not forty, and he has everything necessary to be loved—beauty, wit, sweet temper, and noble behaviour."

"And he forgives your amorous caprices?"

"What do you mean by caprices? A year ago he obtained possession of me, and before him I had never belonged to a man; you are the first who inspired me with a fancy. When I confessed it to him he was rather surprised, then he laughed, and read me a short lecture upon the risk I was running in trusting a man who might prove indiscreet. He wanted me to know at least who you were before going any further, but it was too late. I answered for your discretion, and of course I made him laugh by my being so positively the guarantee of a man whom I did not know."

"When did you confide in him?"

"The day before yesterday, and without concealing anything from him. I have shewn him my letters and yours; he thinks you are a Frenchman, although you represent yourself as a Venetian.

He is very curious to know who you are, but you need not be afraid; I promise you faithfully never to take any steps to find it out myself."

"And I promise you likewise not to try to find out who is this wonderful man as wonderful as you are yourself. I am very miserable when I think of the sorrow I have caused you."

"Do not mention that subject any more; when I consider the matter, I see that only a conceited man would have acted differently."

Before leaving her, she granted me another token of her affection through the little window, and her gaze followed me as far as the door.

In the evening, at the time named by her, I repaired to the casino, and obeying all her instructions I reached a sitting-room in which I found my new conquest dressed in a most elegant costume. The room was lighted up by girandoles, which were reflected by the looking-glasses, and by four splendid candlesticks placed on a table covered with books. M—— M—— struck me as entirely different in her beauty to what she had seemed in the garb of a nun. She wore no cap, and her hair was fastened behind in a thick twist; but I passed rapidly over that part of her person, because I could not bear the idea of a wig, and I could not compliment her about it. I threw myself at her feet to shew her my deep gratitude, and I kissed with rapture her beautiful hands, waiting impatiently for the amorous contest which I was

longing for; but M—— M—— thought fit to oppose some resistance. Oh, how sweet they are! those denials of a loving mistress, who delays the happy moment only for the sake of enjoying its delights better! As a lover respectful, tender, but bold, enterprising, certain of victory, I blended delicately the gentleness of my proceedings with the ardent fire which was consuming me; and stealing the most voluptuous kisses from the most beautiful mouth I felt as if my soul would burst from my body. We spent two hours in the preliminary contest, at the end of which we congratulated one another, on her part for having contrived to resist, on mine for having controlled my impatience.

Wanting a little rest, and understanding each other as if by a natural instinct, she said to me,—

"My friend, I have an appetite which promises to do honour to the supper; are you able to keep me good company?"

"Yes," I said, knowing well what I could do in that line, "yes, I can; and afterwards you shall judge whether I am able to sacrifice to Love as well as to Comus."

She rang the bell, and a woman, middle-aged but well-dressed and respectable-looking, laid out a table for two persons; she then placed on another table close by all that was necessary to enable us to do without attendance, and she brought, one after the other, eight different dishes in Sèvres

porcelain placed on silver heaters. It was a delicate and plentiful supper.

When I tasted the first dish I at once recognized the French style of cooking, and she did not deny it. We drank nothing but Burgundy and Champagne. She dressed the salad cleverly and quickly, and in everything she did I had to admire the graceful ease of her manners. It was evident that she owed her education to a lover who was a first-rate connoisseur. I was curious to know him, and as we were drinking some punch I told her that if she would gratify my curiosity in that respect I was ready to tell her my name.

"Let time, dearest," she answered, "satisfy our mutual curiosity."

M—— M—— had, amongst the charms and trinkets fastened to the chain of her watch, a small crystal bottle exactly similar to one that I wore myself. I called her attention to that fact, and as mine was filled wih cotton soaked in otto of roses I made her smell it.

"I have the same," she observed.

And she made me inhale its fragrance.

"It is a very scarce perfume," I said, "and very expensive."

"Yes; in fact it cannot be bought."

"Very true; the inventor of that essence wears a crown; it is the King of France; his majesty made a pound of it, which cost him thirty thousand crowns."

"Mine was a gift presented to my lover, and he gave it to me."

"Madame de Pompadour sent a small phial of it to M. de Mocenigo, the Venetian ambassador in Paris, through M. de B——, now French ambassador here."

"Do you know him?"

"I have had the honour to dine with him on the very day he came to take leave of the ambassador by whom I had been invited. M. de B—— is a man whom fortune has smiled upon, but he has captivated it by his merit; he is not less distinguished by his talents than by his birth; he is, I believe, Count de Lyon. I recollect that he was nicknamed 'Belle Babet,' on account of his handsome face. There is a small collection of poetry written by him which does him great honour."

It was near midnight; we had made an excellent supper, and we were near a good fire. Besides, I was in love with a beautiful woman, and thinking that time was precious I became very pressing; but she resisted.

"Cruel darling, have you promised me happiness only to make me suffer the tortures of Tantalus? If you will not give way to love, at least obey the laws of nature: after such a delicious supper, go to bed."

"Are you sleepy?"

"Of course I am not; but it is late enough to go to bed. Allow me to undress you; I will

remain by your bedside, or even go away if you wish it."

"If you were to leave me, you would grieve me much."

"My grief would be as great as yours, believe me; but if I remain what shall we do?"

"We can lie down in our clothes on this sofa."

"With our clothes! Well, let it be so; I will let you sleep, if you wish it; but you must forgive me if I do not sleep myself; for to sleep near you and without undressing would be impossible."

"Wait a little."

She rose from her seat, turned the sofa crosswise, opened it, took out pillows, sheets, blankets, and in one minute we had a splendid bed, wide and convenient. She took a large handkerchief, which she wrapped round my head, and she gave me another, asking me to render her the same service. I began my task, dissembling my disgust for the wig, but a precious discovery caused me the most agreeable surprise; for, instead of the wig, my hands found the most magnificent hair I had ever seen. I uttered a scream of delight and admiration which made her laugh, and she told me that a nun was under no other obligation than to conceal her hair from the uninitiated. Thereupon she pushed me adroitly and made me fall on the sofa. I got up again, and having thrown off my clothes as quick as lightning I threw myself on her rather than near her. She was very strong,

and folding me in her arms she thought that I ought to forgive her for all the torture she was condemning me to. I had not obtained any essential favour; I was burning, but I was trying to master my impatience, for I did not think that I had yet the right to be exacting. I contrived to undo five or six bows of ribbons, and satisfied with her not opposing any resistance in that quarter my heart throbbed with pleasure, and I possessed myself of the most beautiful bosom, which I smothered under my kisses. But her favours went no further; and my excitement increasing in proportion to the new perfections I discovered in her, I doubled my efforts; all in vain. At last, compelled to give way to fatigue, I fell asleep in her arms, holding her tightly against me. A noisy chime of bells woke us.

"What is the matter?" I exclaimed.

"Let us get up, dearest; it is time for me to return to the convent."

"Dress yourself, and let me have the pleasure of seeing you in the garb of a saint, since you are going away a virgin."

"Be satisfied for this time, dearest, and learn from me how to practice abstinence; we shall be happier another time. When I have gone, if you have nothing to hurry you, you can rest here."

She rang the bell, and the same woman who had appeared in the evening, and was most likely the secret minister and the confidante of her

amorous mysteries, came in. After her hair had been dressed, she took off her gown, locked up her jewellery in her bureau, put on the stays of a nun, in which she hid the two magnificent globes which had been during that fatiguing night the principal agents of my happiness, and assumed her monastic robes. The woman having gone out to call the gondoliers, M—— M—— kissed me warmly and tenderly, and said to me,—

"I expect to see you the day after to-morrow, so as to hear from you which night I am to meet you in Venice; and then, my beloved lover, you shall be happy and I too. Farewell."

Pleased without being satisfied, I went to bed and slept soundly until noon.

I left the casino without seeing anyone, and being well masked I repaired to the house of Laura, who gave me a letter from my dear C—— C——. Here is a copy of it:

"I am going to give you, my best beloved, a specimen of my way of thinking; and I trust that, far from lowering me in your estimation, you will judge me, in spite of my youth, capable of keeping a secret and worthy of being your wife. Certain that your heart is mine, I do not blame you for having made a mystery of certain things, and not being jealous of what can divert your mind and help you to bear patiently our cruel separation, I can only delight in whatever procures you some pleasure. Listen now. Yesterday, as I

was going along one of the halls, I dropped a tooth-pick which I held in my hand, and to get it again, I was compelled to displace a stool which happened to be in front of a crack in the partition. I have already become as curious as a nun—a fault very natural to idle people—I placed my eye against the small opening, and whom did I see? You in person, my darling, conversing in the most lively manner with my charming friend, Sister M—— M——. It would be difficult for you to imagine my surprise and joy. But those two feelings gave way soon to the fear of being seen and of exciting the curiosity of some inquisitive nun. I quickly replaced the stool, and I went away. Tell me all, dearest friend, you will make me happy. How could I cherish you with all my soul, and not be anxious to know the history of your adventure? Tell me if she knows you, and how you have made her acquaintance. She is my best friend, the one of whom I have spoken so often to you in my letters, without thinking it necessary to tell you her name. She is the friend who teaches me French, and has lent me books which gave me a great deal of information on a matter generally little known to women. If it had not been for her, the cause of the accident which has been so near costing me my life, would have been discovered. She gave me sheets and linen immediately; to her I owe my honour; but she has necessarily learned in that

way that I have a lover, as I know that she has one; but neither of us has shewn any anxiety to know the secrets of the other. Sister M—— M—— is a rare woman. I feel certain, dearest, that you love one another; it cannot be otherwise since you are acquainted; but as I am not jealous of that affection, I deserve that you should tell me all. I pity you both, however; for all you may do will, I fear, only irritate your passion. Everyone in the convent thinks that you are ill, and I am longing to see you. Come, at least, once. Adieu!"

The letter of C—— C—— inspired me with the deepest esteem for her, but it caused me great anxiety, because, although I felt every confidence in my dear little wife, the small crack in the wall might expose M—— M—— and myself to the inquisitive looks of other persons. Besides, I found myself compelled to deceive that amiable, trusting friend, and to tell a falsehood, for delicacy and honour forbade me to tell her the truth. I wrote to her immediately that her friendship for M—— M—— made it her duty to warn her friend at once that she had seen her in the parlour with a masked gentleman. I added that, having heard a great deal of M—— M——'s merit, and wishing to make her acquaintance, I had called on her under an assumed name; that I entreated her not to tell her friend who I was, but she might say that she had recognized in me the

gentleman who attended their church. I assured her with barefaced impudence that there was no love between M—— M—— and me, but without concealing that I thought her a superior woman.

On St. Catherine's Day, the patroness of my dear C—— C——, I bethought myself of affording that lovely prisoner the pleasure of seeing me. As I was leaving the church after mass, and just as I was going to take a gondola, I observed that a man was following me. It looked suspicious, and I determined to ascertain whether I was right. The man took a gondola and followed mine. It might have been purely accidental; but, keeping on my guard for fear of surprise, I alighted in Venice at the Morosini Palace; the fellow alighted at the same place; his intentions were evident. I left the palace, and turning towards the Flanders Gate I stopped in a narrow street, took my knife in my hand, waited for the spy, seized him by the collar, and pushing him against the wall with the knife at his throat I commanded him to tell me what business he had with me. Trembling all over he would have confessed everything, but unluckily someone entered the street. The spy escaped and I was no wiser, but I had no doubt that for the future that fellow at least would keep at a respectful distance. It shewed me how easy it would be for an obstinate spy to discover my identity, and I made up my mind never to go to Muran but with a mask, or at night.

The next day I had to see my beautiful nun in order to ascertain which day she would sup with me in Venice, and I went early to the convent. She did not keep me waiting, and her face was radiant with joy. She complimented me upon my having resumed my attendance at their church; all the nuns had been delighted to see me again after an absence of three weeks.

"The abbess," she said, "told me how glad she was to see you, and that she was certain to find out who you are."

I then related to her the adventure of the spy, and we both thought that it was most likely the means taken by the sainted woman to gratify her curiosity about me.

"I have resolved not to attend your church any more."

"That will be a great deprivation to me, but in our common interest I can but approve your resolution."

She related the affair of the treacherous crack in the partition, and added,—

"It is already repaired, and there is no longer any fear in that quarter. I heard of it from a young boarder whom I love dearly, and who is much attached to me. I am not curious to know her name, and she has never mentioned it to me."

"Now, darling angel, tell me whether my happiness will be postponed."

"Yes, but only for twenty-four hours; the new

professed sister has invited me to supper in her room, and you must understand I cannot invent any plausible excuse for refusing her invitation."

"You would not, then, tell her in confidence the very legitimate obstacle which makes me wish that the new sisters never take supper?"

"Certainly not: we never trust anyone so far in a convent. Besides, dearest, such an invitation cannot be declined unless I wish to gain a most bitter enemy."

"Could you not say that you are ill?"

"Yes; but then the visits!"

"I understand; if you should refuse, the escape might be suspected."

"The escape! impossible; here no one admits the possibility of breaking out of the convent."

"Then you are the only one able to perform that miracle?"

"You may be sure of that; but, as is always the case, it is gold which performs that miracle."

"And many others, perhaps."

"Oh! the time has gone by for them! But tell me, my love, where will you wait for me to-morrow, two hours after the setting of the sun?"

"Could I not wait for you at your casino?"

"No, because my lover will take me himself to Venice."

"Your lover?"

"Yes, himself."

"It is not possible."

"Yet it is true."

"I can wait for you in St. John and St. Paul's Square behind the pedestal of the statue of Bartholomew of Bergamo."

"I have never seen either the square or the statue except in engravings; it is enough, however, and I will not fail. Nothing but very stormy weather could prevent me from coming to a rendezvous for which my heart is panting."

"And if the weather were bad?"

"Then, dearest, there would be nothing lost; and you would come here again in order to appoint another day."

I had no time to lose, for I had no casino. I took a second rower so as to reach St. Mark's Square more rapidly, and I immediately set to work looking for what I wanted. When a mortal is so lucky as to be in the good graces of the god Plutus, and is not crack-brained, he is pretty sure to succeed in everything: I had not to search very long before I found a casino suiting my purpose exactly. It was the finest in the neighbourhood of Venice, but, as a natural consequence, it was likewise the most expensive. It had belonged to the English ambassador, who had sold it cheap to his cook before leaving Venice. The owner let it to me until Easter for one hundred sequins, which I paid in advance on condition that he would himself cook the dinners and the suppers I might order.

I had five rooms furnished in the most elegant style, and everything seemed to be calculated for love, pleasure, and good cheer. The service of the dining-room was made through a sham window in the wall, provided with a dumb-waiter revolving upon itself, and fitting the window so exactly that master and servants could not see each other. The drawing-room was decorated with magnificent looking-glasses, crystal chandeliers, girandoles in gilt, bronze, and with a splendid pier-glass placed on a chimney of white marble; the walls were covered with small squares of real china, representing little Cupids and naked amorous couples in all sorts of positions, well calculated to excite the imagination; elegant and very comfortable sofas were placed on every side. Next to it was an octagonal room, the walls, the ceiling, and the floor of which were entirely covered with splendid Venetian glass, arranged in such a manner as to reflect on all sides every position of the amorous couple enjoying the pleasures of love. Close by was a beautiful alcove with two secret outlets; on the right, an elegant dressing-room, on the left, a boudoir which seemed to have been arranged by the mother of Love, with a bath in Carrara marble. Everywhere the wainscots were embossed in ormolu or painted with flowers and arabesques.

After I had given my orders for all the chandeliers to be filled with wax candles, and the finest linen to be provided wherever necessary, I ordered

a most delicate and sumptuous supper for two, without regard to expense, and especially the most exquisite wines. I then took possession of the key of the principal entrance, and warned the master that I did not want to be seen by anyone when I came in or went out.

I observed with pleasure that the clock in the alcove had an alarum, for I was beginning, in spite of love, to be easily influenced by the power of sleep.

Everything being arranged according to my wishes, I went, as a careful and delicate lover, to purchase the finest slippers I could find, and a cap in Alençon point.

I trust my reader does not think me too particular; let him recollect that I was to receive the most accomplished of the sultanas of the master of the universe, and I told that fourth Grace that I had a casino. Was I to begin by giving her a bad idea of my truthfulness?

At the appointed time, that is two hours after sunset, I repaired to my palace; and it would be difficult to imagine the surprise of his honour the French cook, when he saw me arrive alone. Not finding all the chandeliers lighted up as I had ordered, I scolded him well, giving him notice that I did not like to repeat an order.

"I shall not fail, sir, another time, to execute your commands."

"Let the supper be served."

"Your honour ordered it for two."

"Yes, for two; and, this time, be present during my supper, so that I can tell you which dishes I find good or bad."

The supper came through the revolving dumb-waiter in very good order, two dishes at a time. I passed some remarks upon everything; but, to tell the truth, everything was excellent: game, fish, oysters, truffles, wine, dessert, and the whole served in very fine Dresden china and silver-gilt plate.

I told him that he had forgotten hard eggs, anchovies, and prepared vinegar to dress a salad. He lifted his eyes towards heaven, as if to plead guilty to a very heinous crime.

After a supper which lasted two hours, and during which I must certainly have won the admiration of my host, I asked him to bring me the bill. He presented it to me shortly afterwards, and I found it reasonable. I then dismissed him, and lay down in the splendid bed in the alcove; my excellent supper brought on very soon the most delicious sleep which, without the Burgundy and the Champagne, might very likely not have visited me, if I had thought that the following night would see me in the same place, and in possession of a lovely divinity. It was broad day-light when I awoke, and after ordering the finest fruit and some ices for the evening I left the casino. In order to shorten a day which my impatient desires would

have caused me to find very long, I went to the faro-table, and I saw with pleasure that I was as great a favourite with fortune as with love. Everything proceeded according to my wishes, and I delighted in ascribing my happy success to the influence of my nun.

I was at the place of meeting one hour before the time appointed, and although the night was cold I did not feel it. Precisely as the hour struck I saw a two-oared gondola reach the shore and a mask come out of it, speak a few words to the gondolier, and take the direction of the statue. My heart was beating quickly, but seeing that it was a man I avoided him, and regretted not having brought my pistols. The mask, however, turning round the statue, came up to me with outstretched hands: I then recognized my angel, who was amused at my surprise and took my arm. Without speaking we went towards St. Mark's Square, and reached my casino, which was only one hundred yards from the St. Moses Theatre.

I found everything in good order; we went upstairs and I threw off my mask and my disguise; but M—— M—— took delight in walking about the rooms and in examining every nook of the charming place in which she was received. Highly gratified to see me admire the grace of her person, she wanted me likewise to admire in her attire the taste and generosity of her lover. She was surprised at the almost magic spell which, although she

remained motionless, shewed her lovely person in a thousand different manners. Her multiplied portraits, reproduced by the looking-glasses, and the numerous wax candles disposed to that effect, offered to her sight a spectacle entirely new to her, and from which she could not withdraw her eyes. Sitting down on a stool I contemplated her elegant person with rapture. A coat of rosy velvet, embroidered with gold spangles, a vest to match, embroidered likewise in the richest fashion, breeches of black satin, diamond buckles, a solitaire of great value on her little finger, and on the other hand a ring: such was her toilet. Her black lace mask was remarkable for its fineness and the beauty of the design. To enable me to see her better she stood before me. I looked in her pockets, in which I found a gold snuff-box, a sweetmeat-box adorned with pearls, a gold case, a splendid opera-glass, handkerchiefs of the finest cambric, soaked rather than perfumed with the most precious essences. I examined attentively the richness and the workmanship of her two watches, of her chains, of her trinkets, brilliant with diamonds. The last article I found was a pistol; it was an English weapon of fine steel, and of the most beautiful finish.

"All I see, my divine angel, is not worthy of you; yet I cannot refrain from expressing my admiration for the wonderful, I might almost say

adorable, being who wants to convince you that you are truly his mistress."

"That is what he said when I asked him to bring me to Venice, and to leave me. 'Amuse yourself,' he said, 'and I hope that the man whom you are going to make happy will convince you that he is worthy of it.'"

"He is indeed an extraordinary man, and I do not think there is another like him. Such a lover is a unique being; and I feel that I could not be like him, as deeply as I fear to be unworthy of a happiness which dazzles me."

"Allow me to leave you, and to take off these clothes alone."

"Do anything you please."

A quarter of an hour afterwards my mistress came back to me. Her hair was dressed like a man's; the front locks came down her cheeks, and the black hair, fastened with a knot of blue ribbon, reached the bend of her legs; her form was that of Antinöus; her clothes alone, being cut in the French style, prevented the illusion from being complete. I was in a state of ecstatic delight, and I could not realize my happiness.

"No, adorable woman," I exclaimed, "you are not made for a mortal, and I do not believe that you will ever be mine. At the very moment of possessing you some miracle will wrest you from my arms. Your divine spouse, perhaps, jealous of a simple mortal, will annihilate all my

hope. It is possible that in a few minutes I shall no longer exist."

"Are you mad, dearest? I am yours this very instant, if you wish it."

"Ah! if I wish it! Although fasting, come! Love and happiness will be my food!"

She felt cold, we sat near the fire; and unable to master my impatience I unfastened a diamond brooch which pinned her ruffle. Dear reader, there are some sensations so powerful and so sweet that years cannot weaken the remembrance of them. My mouth had already covered with kisses that ravishing bosom; but then the troublesome corset had not allowed me to admire all its perfection. Now I felt it free from all restraint and from all unnecessary support; I have never seen, never touched, anything more beautiful, and the two magnificent globes of the Venus de Medicis, even if they had been animated by the spark of life given by Prometheus, would have yielded the palm to those of my divine nun.

I was burning with ardent desires, and I would have satisfied them on the spot, if my adorable mistress had not calmed my impatience by these simple words:

"Wait until after supper."

I rang the bell; she shuddered.

"Do not be anxious, dearest."

And I shewed her the secret of the sham window.

"You will be able to tell your lover that no one saw you."

"He will appreciate your delicate attention, and that will prove to him that you are not a novice in the art of love. But it is evident that I am not the only one who enjoys with you the delights of this charming residence."

"You are wrong, believe me: you are the first woman I have seen here. You are not, adorable creature, my first love, but you shall be the last."

"I shall be happy if you are faithful. My lover is constant, kind, gentle and amiable; yet my heart has ever been fancy-free with him."

"Then his own heart must be the same; for if his love was of the same nature as mine you would never have made me happy."

"He loves me as I love you; do you believe in my love for you?"

"Yes, I want to believe in it; but you would not allow me to. . . ."

"Do not say any more; for I feel that I could forgive you in anything, provided you told me all. The joy I experience at this moment is caused more by the hope I have of gratifying your desires than by the idea that I am going to pass a delightful night with you. It will be the first in my life."

"What! Have you never passed such a night with your lover?"

"Several; but friendship, compliance, and

gratitude, perhaps, were then the only contributors to our pleasures; the most essential—love—was never present. In spite of that, my lover is like you; his wit is lively, very much the same as yours, and, as far as his features are concerned, he is very handsome; yet it is not you. I believe him more wealthy than you, although this casino almost convinces me that I am mistaken, but what does love care for riches? Do not imagine that I consider you endowed with less merit than he, because you confess yourself incapable of his heroism in allowing me to enjoy another love. Quite the contrary; I know that you would not love me as you do, if you told me that you could be as indulgent as he is for one of my caprices."

"Will he be curious to hear the particulars of this night?"

"Most likely he will think that he will please me by asking what has taken place, and I will tell him everything, except such particulars as might humiliate him."

After the supper, which she found excellent, she made some punch, and she was a very good hand at it. But I felt my impatience growing stronger every moment, and I said,—

"Recollect that we have only seven hours before us, and that we should be very foolish to waste them in this room."

"You reason better than Socrates," she

answered, "and your eloquence has convinced me. Come!"

She led me to the elegant dressing-room, and I offered her the fine night-cap which I had bought for her, asking her at the same time to dress her hair like a woman. She took it with great pleasure, and begged me to go and undress myself in the drawing-room, promising to call me as soon as she was in bed.

I had not long to wait: when pleasure is waiting for us, we all go quickly to work. I fell into her arms, intoxicated with love and happiness, and during seven hours I gave her the most positive proofs of my ardour and of the feelings I entertained for her. It is true that she taught me nothing new, materially speaking, but a great deal in sighs, in ecstacies, in enjoyments which can have their full development only in a sensitive soul in the sweetest of all moments. I varied our pleasures in a thousand different ways, and I astonished her by making her feel that she was susceptible of greater enjoyment than she had any idea of. At last the fatal alarum was heard: we had to stop our amorous transports; but before she left my arms she raised her eyes towards heaven as if to thank her Divine Master for having given her the courage to declare her passion to me.

We dressed ourselves, and observing that I put the lace night-cap in her pocket she assured me that she would keep it all her life as a witness

of the happiness which overwhelmed her. After drinking a cup of coffee we went out, and I left her at St. John and St. Paul's Square, promising to call on her the day after the morrow; I watched her until I saw her safe in her gondola, and I then went to bed. Ten hours of profound sleep restored me to my usual state of vigour.

END OF VOL. III.